

## U.N. general announces Bosnia ceasefire

BELGRADE (AP) — A U.N. general announced Friday that Bosnia Serbs had agreed to a ceasefire throughout the war-torn republic beginning Sunday. "We have agreed to a ceasefire Sunday at 1200 all over Bosnia-Herzegovina," said Gen. Lars Eric Wahlgren, after emerging from more than five hours of meetings with the Bosnian-Serb commander, Gen. Ratko Mladic. The announcement came a day after Bosnia's president, Alija Izetbegovic, signed a U.N. peace plan for Bosnia, leaving the Serbs as the only holdout among the three factions fighting in the republic. It was unclear whether Bosnia's Croats and Muslims had been consulted about the ceasefire, and whether it would have any more success than dozens of other truces that failed almost immediately.

See story on page 8

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Volume 17 Number 5267

AMMAN SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1993, SHAWAL 3, 1413

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

## Emir of Qatar leaves hospital

DOHA (R) — The emir, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, was released from hospital Friday and declared fit after examination for an unexplained ailment. The official Qatari News Agency (QNA) quoted a royal court statement saying he left the general hospital at 7 a.m. (0400 GMT) after general medical tests. "The results of the tests were good and reassuring," the statement said. The emir had been admitted to the hospital at Wednesday evening, when an announcement said he was to be subjected to tests. A flurry of telephone contacts from rulers of neighbouring countries was made to his son, Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. The agency said he had reassured each about the emir's health. Sheikh Khalifa was born in 1930 and has been the ruler of Qatar since 1972.

## Gulf ministers to discuss energy taxes

BAHRAIN (AP) — Foreign ministers of six oil-rich Arab states will meet next month to discuss U.S. and European moves to impose energy taxes, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) chief was quoted Friday as saying. Sheikh Fahem Sultan Al Qassimi, who has replaced Abdullah Bishara as the secretary of the alliance, said other topics on the agenda would include a discussion of whether Iraq is complying with Gulf war ceasefire demands. In an interview with the Emirates News Agency (WAM) of Abu Dhabi, monitored in Bahrain, he said the meeting of the six GCC ministers was set for April 4 in Riyadh. The proposed energy taxes, said Mr. Qassimi, would be discussed in light of a communiqué issued by the council's oil ministers March 14 in which they declared their opposition to such levies. "The GCC member states are keen to protect their oil interests and to maintain the flow of their oil exports without impediments or tax restrictions that would affect the stability of the world oil market and the GCC plans to meet the world economy's oil needs," Mr. Qassimi said in the interview.

## Hizbollah frees Israeli-backed gunman

BEIRUT (AP) — The Iranian-backed Hizbollah Friday released an Israeli-backed militiaman to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Beirut radio said. They said the bearded Elias Asmar, a South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiaman, was handed over to Pascal Keaton of the Red Cross at 2:30 (1330 GMT) near Hizbollah's headquarters in the ancient town of Baalbek. They said Keaton was to drive Asmar to the town of Jezzine, 70 kilometres southeast of Beirut where he would be turned over to SLA officials. A statement by Hizbollah earlier in the day said the release of Asmar was a goodwill gesture on the occasion of the 'Eid Al Fitr feast (see page 2).

## Iran landslides kill five

NICOSIA (AP) — Landslides in Iran's southwestern Chaharmahal-and-Bakhtiari province have killed five people, Tehran Radio said Friday. The radio said the landslides, caused by heavy rains, left cracks 100 metres deep in the ground. The deaths occurred in the town of Ardal, 400 kilometres south of Tehran, in the past few days.

## Turkish forces kill rebel Kurd, detain 82

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish security forces killed a rebel Kurd and detained 82 others in military operations in seven provinces Friday, the Anatolia news agency reported. It quoted the emergency rule governor's office as saying that security forces killed a member of the separatist Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) near the town of Lice, southeast Turkey, after he shot at a patrol. The office said 50 other PKK members were detained in raids in the provinces of Diyarbakir, Mardin, Sirnak, Bingol, and Siirt. Police also arrested 32 PKK members in the Mediterranean port city of Mersin, the provincial police chief said. More than 5,500 people have been killed since 1984.

# Bid to impeach Yeltsin sputters in parliament

## Beleaguered Russian president reshuffles cabinet

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Efforts to impeach Boris Yeltsin sputtered Friday and Russia's chief justice offered a compromise to end the power struggle by holding early elections and creating a new legislature.

Mr. Yeltsin, speaking to the Congress of People's Deputies on the first day of its emergency session in the Grand Kremlin Palace, reaffirmed his call for a nationwide referendum April 25 to decide who should rule Russia.

The Russian president, in a gesture of reconciliation, embraced some points of the compromise plan offered by Valery Zorkin, the chief justice of the constitutional court. Mr. Yeltsin also shuffled his cabinet and acknowledged making "mistakes" that hurt the economy.

Mr. Zorkin, in a 10-point proposal, called for simultaneous legislative and presidential elections in autumn and also suggested replacing the congress with a bicameral legislature.

Mr. Yeltsin said in his speech Friday that he could support some of Mr. Zorkin's proposals and said a referendum would be held.

The opening of the congress, Russia's highest parliamentary body, climaxed a week of tension between Mr. Yeltsin and the legislative branch.

Although hardliners have been calling for Mr. Yeltsin's impeachment, preliminary votes on other issues indicated they did not have the two-thirds majority needed to oust him for alleged violations of the constitution.

Hardliners acknowledged they had lost momentum.

"Despite the fact that Yeltsin deserves to be ousted, the most reasonable decision now would be to hold simultaneous early elections," said Viktor Aksynchits, a leader of the de-

puties. He said Mr. Yeltsin should resign or be ousted. The issue of impeachment did not come to a formal vote by Friday afternoon.

Many deputies were hostile towards the 62-year-old Russian president, laughing derisively when he said Russia relied too much on foreign aid, and when he blamed the central bank for fueling inflation.

Outside the Kremlin, several thousand Yeltsin critics and supporters staged rival rallies, sepa-

rated by police barricades. "I want Yeltsin, the traitor of the motherland who sold his country to the West for hard currency, the drunkard, to get the death sentence for hurting Russia, which has suffered so much," yelled Ivan Alexeyev.

Under a sea of red, communist flags behind St. Basil's Cathedral, nationalist and communist protesters called on the congress to sweep aside Mr. Yeltsin.

"Deputy, deputy, this is your Stalingrad," they chanted in a reference to the battle which turned the tide of war against German troops in 1942.

Banners read "The motherland calls you" — a wartime recruiting slogan — and "Yeltsin is the enemy of the people, down with Yeltsin's occupying regime."

Mr. Yeltsin's main rival for power, Legislative Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, had urged the congress meet in emergency session after the president Saturday threatened to impose "special" rule to break the political deadlock blocking reform. Mr. Yeltsin later backed away from the threat and did not declare any kind of emergency rule in a decree published Wednesday.

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Russian President Boris Yeltsin listens to Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov during the morning session Friday of an extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies (AFP photo)

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## Israeli army destroys 9 Palestinian homes in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers blew up nine buildings in a search for wanted Palestinian activists in the occupied Gaza Strip Friday, making at least 194 people homeless, Arab reports said.

The army confirmed that explosives had been used in an unsuccessful bid to root out wanted men in the Rafah refugee camp, but did not say how many houses had been destroyed.

The soldiers used anti-tank missiles to destroy the homes, the Arab reports said. One of the destroyed buildings alone housed 84 people, they said.

The army has acknowledged using the missiles since last November, saying it resulted in less casualties for soldiers and civilians than house-to-house searches for wanted men. The anti-tank missiles are only fired once troops are certain the buildings are cleared out, the army claims.

Palestinian negotiators at the U.S.-backed peace talks have said the use of the anti-tank missiles hinders the development of the talks.

One of the homes belonged to Ibrahim Hamdan Barhoum, a member of the outlawed Hamas fundamentalist Islamic movement who was expelled by Israel with some 400 Palestinians to Lebanon last December.

The operation, which started before dawn and ended 12 hours later, took place a few hours after wanted Palestinians staged a defiant march through the camp, Israel Television said.

An army spokesman said that while the blasts failed to root out any of the wanted men, three people were arrested in connection with an arms cache uncovered in one of the homes, and for membership in Hamas.

Chief Palestinian delegate to Middle East peace talks Haidar Abdul Shafi said Thursday at a news conference that troops have



A mounted Israeli policeman watches a passing Palestinian woman and baby outside Jerusalem's Old City on Friday, the last day of the 'Eid Al Fitr (AFP photo)

damaged 95 houses in Gaza with missiles since December.

On Thursday Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian who stabbed and wounded a soldier in the Gaza Strip. At least 74 Palestinians and 12 Israelis have been killed since the Dec. 17 expulsion of Palestinians.

Officials said part of a nature reserve was burned out near the Dead Sea in a fire they believed was started by Palestinians.

Major voices concern over violence, page 2

## Palestinian delegation ready for exiles' phased return

By Suleiman Al Khalidi  
Reuters

AMMAN — The chief Palestinian negotiator said Friday his team would return to Middle East peace talks if Israel promised to halt future expulsions of Palestinians.

Haidar Abdul Shafi also said the Palestinians would be more flexible in accepting a gradual return of Palestinians expelled to South Lebanon if Israel committed itself to such a pledge.

"An Israeli pledge not to resort to (expulsions) in the future is the main Palestinian demand and will be a positive indicator on which we can go back to the peace talks," Mr. Abdul Shafi, a leading Gaza doctor, told Reuters in an interview in Amman.

"Israel still refuses to give the pledge and this is a fundamental matter," he added. "If it continues to reject this, it will be difficult for us to return to the talks."

Arab-Israeli peace talks have

been suspended since Israel's December expulsion of 415 Palestinians accused of links to hardline anti-Israeli violence.

Israel has angered Arabs and the Palestinians for refusing to implement U.N. Resolution 799 which demands their immediate repatriation. Under a deal worked out with the United States, however, it agreed to take back 101 expellees and let the rest return before the end of the year.

"In return (for such a pledge) we can be lenient on rescheduling the return of the (expellees) but in a time frame not exceeding next June," Dr. Abdul Shafi said.

His stand contrasts sharply with that of the exiles who say they will accept nothing less than their immediate return.

Dr. Abdul Shafi said the resumption of the 16-month-old talks hinged on the outcome of a

Iran renews attack on peace process, page 2

## U.N. team seeks Iraqi assurances

BAHRAIN (AP) — A senior U.N. official said Friday Baghdad had apologized for a recent incident that found troops aiming anti-aircraft guns at a helicopter flying international weapons experts.

Nikita Smidovich, a member of the U.N. special commission that is overseeing the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, spoke to reporters on the eve of his departure Saturday for Baghdad.

Mr. Smidovich will be accompanied by two other Russians, two Americans and a German who will set up a monitoring operation of military sites, which he refused to identify.

"We will remind them of their obligation of full respect for the U.N. rights," the Russian weapons expert said in Bahrain, regional headquarters of the U.N. special commission.

It was Mr. Smidovich's team that was threatened by the Iraqi anti-aircraft gunners in February.

"Fortunately, there were no casualties on our side... we will mention it as specific example of Iraqi non-compliance, and of course they (have to) provide assurances it will not happen again," he said.

The incident, he said, was "taken very seriously by the commission and the Security Council." The Iraqis, he said, have "apologised and promised that it will never happen again."

It was not clear how the apology was made.

Mr. Smidovich said he would remind the Iraqis "that without full compliance with resolutions adopted by the Security Council, there's no way the council will come to an agreement to remove sanctions."

Iraq has been pressing for an end to the U.N. embargo, imposed in August 1990 after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

"The helicopter incident signifies there's still steps to be taken by Iraq" before the sanctions could be eased, Mr. Smidovich said.

He said Iraq still refuses to

(Continued on page 5)

## S. Africa got world help to make nuclear arms - activist

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — The United States, Israel, Germany and France provided crucial assistance to South Africa's nuclear programme for decades, an arms control activist said Friday.

The statements contradict South African President F.W. de Klerk, who said Wednesday that South Africa's nuclear programme was entirely home-grown.

Six atomic bombs were built during the 1970s and 1980s, but they were dismantled in 1990, Mr. De Klerk said.

"What they are saying is only the tip of the iceberg," said the activist, Abdul Minty, who left his native South Africa in 1950 and now heads the Norwegian-based World Campaign Against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa.

Mr. Minty said Mr. De Klerk denied foreign assistance because he did not want to embarrass Western nations that not only helped South Africa build the bomb but kept secret their knowledge of the programme.



F.W. de Klerk

Mr. Minty said the U.S. assistance dates to the 1950s, possibly earlier. A total of 155 U.S. scientists with nuclear expertise visited South Africa between 1957 and 1977, he said, while South Africa

(Continued on page 3)

## Only one suspect still loose in New York bombing, FBI says

NEW YORK (AP) — Four of the five men arrested in the World Trade Centre bombing proclaimed their innocence Thursday, and a month after the blast, federal investigators believe there may be only one suspect still loose.

"The circle is now very narrow," Jim Eposito, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) New Jersey office, said after the fifth suspect was arrested early Thursday.

Authorities also disclosed that an explosives timing device like those in other bombings was recovered at the New Jersey home of suspect Nidal Ayyad, a chemical engineer who investigators believe has bomb making know-how.

But at his court appearance, Mr. Ayyad insisted: "I am not guilty. I swear by all I hold dear — The Koran, my wife, child and mother — I had nothing to do with this."

The bombing a month ago Friday killed six, injured more than 1,000 and forced evacuation of the world's second tallest buildings.



Fatima Badra Ayyad, mother of Nidal Ayyad who is a suspect in the World Trade Centre bombing, and a man identified as Surhi, the uncle Mr. Ayyad, are mobbed by the media Thursday as they exit a Manhattan court (AFP photo)

Authorities say the motive remains unclear, though all five men arrested were born in the Middle East and at least four of them are believed to have links to a hardline Muslim cleric who advocates the overthrow of Egypt's secular government.

(Continued on page 5)

## Netanyahu wins Likud leadership; Weizman is elected Israeli president

TEL AVIV (AP) — Benjamin Netanyahu, elected to lead the right-wing opposition Likud bloc, called Thursday for party unity to topple Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government.

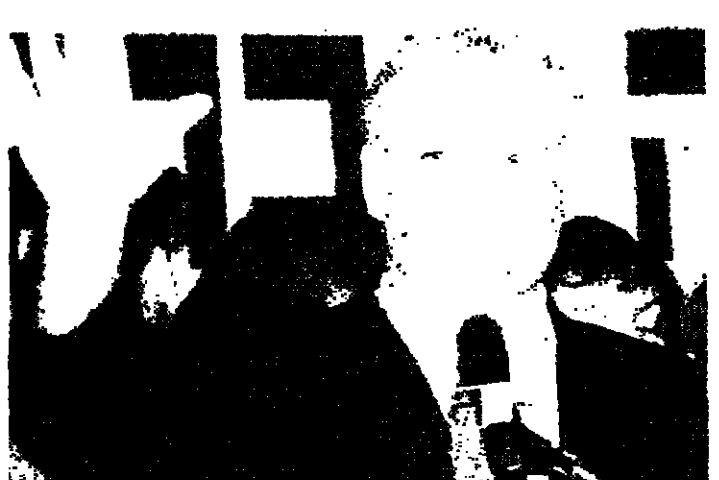
"We will try through parliamentary and other methods to topple this government as soon as possible and go to new elections," Mr. Netanyahu told his followers at a victory rally in Tel Aviv.

Mr. Netanyahu, a former U.N. ambassador known for his suave style and flair for publicity, won a landslide victory in Likud primaries held Wednesday. The results were only announced Thursday.

He won 52.1 per cent of the vote in a four-way race, and takes over from retiring former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who led the Likud since 1983.

In his victory speech, Mr. Netanyahu, 43, said Mr. Rabin's government was too soft on a recent wave of Palestinian violence and too conciliatory on "territorial compromise" in the U.S.-sponsored peace talks with Arabs.

Mr. Rabin's Labour party wrested power from the Likud last June.



Benjamin Netanyahu waves to his supporters after his election victory Thursday (AFP photo)

Mr. Netanyahu's victory may boost Likud's chances of defeating Labour in the next elections in 1996. Israel Television immediately noted the age difference between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Rabin, who is 71, calling the Likud leader "Israel's Clinton."

Mr. Netanyahu told supporters that elections could be advanced before 1996.

His American-style approach is new in Israel, whose leaders until now were adults when Israel became independent in 1948. He gained international exposure when he appeared as Israel's spokesman during the Gulf war. "Bibi" Netanyahu was a member of an elite army commando

(Continued on page 5)

## Exiles split again on faction lines

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (Agencies) — The nearly 400 Palestinians exiled by Israel marked their 100th day of banishment in southeast Lebanon by splitting anew Thursday, only three days after announcing the burial of their first open rift.

Sheikh Ahmad Shami, who leads about 35 exiles from the Islamic Jihad movement, told a news conference that exiles of the bigger Hamas organisation "are suppressing and muzzling us."

"We are deprived of our right to criticise the Egyptian regime and its crackdown on Muslim fundamentalist brethren because Hamas contends this will hurt our cause," Sheikh Shami said.

"I disagree, and I am going to keep attacking the Egyptian regime and (President) Hosni Mubarak, irrespective of what Abdul Aziz Rantisi thinks," said the pro-Iranian Shami.

Dr. Rantisi, a Gaza physician and a senior Hamas leader, has been acting as official spokesman for the expellees since their expulsion Dec. 17.

"We are not trying to muzzle others," Dr. Rantisi told reporters in response to Sheikh Shami's attack. "But we have agreed since our (expulsion) to refrain from getting embroiled in inter-Arab politics."

Sheikh Shami declined to answer a question as to whether he sympathises with Egyptian, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, whose Arab disciples in the United States are suspected of engineering the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

"What embarrasses me is the almost daily praise Rantisi heaps on Arab governments, and Egypt in particular. Why should we as (expellees) declare support for a regime that is persecuting our brothers in Islam?" Sheikh Shami said.

Islamic Jihad relies mainly on aid from Iran. Its exiles have been receiving assistance in their makeshift tent-camp from Hizbollah, the standard bearer of Iran's brand of Shiite Muslim fundamentalism.

Exiles from Hamas have been getting assistance mainly from the mainstream Fateh faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which is dominant in all Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon.

The exiles first split last week

(Continued on page 5)

Expellees bloom in tent-camp, page 2



## Expellees bloom in snowy South Lebanon tent-camp

By Peter Smerdon  
Reuters

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon — Palestinians dumped by Israel into South Lebanon are blooming amid spring flowers after a 100 days in exile.

The 396 men see their survival and the problems the expulsion has caused Israel as revenge on the man who put them where they are: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"We didn't want to be heroes," says expellee leader Abdul Aziz Rantisi. "But the evil-doer Rabin brought it on himself."

Conditions have improved vastly from the night the men were banished and trapped northwards in a long line in freezing cold.

Their camp on a rock-strewn hillside between Israeli and Lebanese lines now boasts cellular telephones, televisions, generators, cars, donkeys, a medical centre.

Their health is better than before and there is no sign that the mule-loads of food, clothing and fuel smuggled to them over mountains by pro-Israel guerrillas at night will run out.

A farmer near the camp has opened a shop for the exiles. The sun has warmed their faces and the daily chores of cooking and fetching supplies have built up their muscles.

Two men exiled with broken legs now walk without crutches and those who were overweight admit that excess pounds melted away in what at times appears to be a primitive health resort.

A few exiles have sneaked out to see friends in Lebanon and then returned.

Visitors range from Iranian Revolutionary Guards to foreign aid workers, all posing as journalists, officially the only people allowed to see the expellees.

The renewed ferocity of the anti-Israeli uprising in the Gaza Strip and West Bank and problems over resuming Middle East peace talks since the expulsions on Dec. 17 only make revenge sweeter.

"We feel the longer we stay here the worse the situation in Israel will become, internally and internationally," said Mr. Rantisi, who has taken to signing copies of the Koran and giving them to visitors.

The exiles have little else to believe in but themselves and Islam, whether or not they slip into international obscurity should the peace talks resume next month without their return.

Hardship nevertheless remains. They are bored with the food, the hills, their mindless daily strolls along a strip of road and the view of snow-capped Mount Hermon.

The fear the snakes and scorpions of summer, dread the possibility of late storms and grouch about having to fill tanks from mountain streams and hunt ever farther for firewood.

They miss homes, families and above all their children. "Up until now it has been our victory," says Abdul Fatah Al Awaish, 35 and a history professor at Hebron University.

"The supplies we have are more than we need. So our problem is no longer humanitarian, it is political," Dr. Awaish says.

"But even if you bring me everything here, you can't bring me my family, my eight kids, my home. We are suffering in the hope that the next generation will have a better future."

Some exiles fear Israel may refuse to take all of them back when they end their maximum terms in exile next December. Mr. Rabin expelled them for

up to two years but in February cut the terms in a U.S. push to save the Arab-Israeli talks.

"We can't say this is a victory because we suffered for 100 days," says Omar Ferwana, the head of the medical team.

"But something happened that is positive not only for us but for the Palestinians and the whole Arab-Israeli problem."

"For hundreds of men thrown out with nothing have succeeded in pressuring Israel and promoting international awareness about our humiliation. This has given the Palestinians new spirit."

Dr. Ferwana's eyes only fill with tears when he talks about his children in the Gaza Strip, which he can reach on the camp telephones. Journalists carry out letters from the expellees.

Asked whether he thinks that his two daughters and two boys know why he is staying in exile with others, Dr. Ferwana says they are too young to know except for his nine-year-old son Saleh.

"When I rang Saleh he just said: 'I love you' so I think he understands. The others only know that their dad, the biggest, best thing in their world, is gone and they want him back."

Single men say they are lucky to have no wives to worry about but are still obsessed with news from the occupied territories.

Nasser Homadah, a 29-year-old hotel worker who was expelled with his brother Jamal, says he was jailed nine times by the Israelis.

"But at least in jail you know that one day for sure you will get out," says Dr. Homadah, relentlessly pacing up and down the road near the camp. "Jail became normal for me. But after 100 days this still isn't normal," he says.



Palestinian expellees throw balloons written with messages congratulating their parents on the occasion of 'Eid Al Fitr' (AFP photo)

## Egyptian militants parade coffin of leader

ASSIUT, Egypt (R) — Muslim militants turned the funeral of a slain leader nicknamed "harsh revenge" into a political demonstration, parading through a southern Egyptian town with his body in a coffin, witnesses said Friday.

Police fired shots into the air when the crowd massed in front of a police station but there were no clashes nor people hurt in the demonstration in Abu Tig Thursday.

The dead man, Abdul Rahman Mohammedi, 25, was killed in a gunfight with police who raided his house at dawn. The police said he was a leader in Al Gama'a, a militant movement led by a blind preacher in the United States whose followers there have been implicated in last month's bombing of the New York World Trade Centre.

About 300 militants roamed through Abu Tig in the early evening chanting anti-government slogans and carrying Mohammed's coffin, a witness said.

They shouted: "There is no God but God, Hosni Mubarak is the enemy of God" through loudspeakers and threw stones at shops.

Mohammedi's burial went ahead and police avoided clashing with the militants but they later set up checkpoints in militant strongholds in the town to detain people suspected of being involved in the protest, security sources said.

The militants, under pressure from a security crackdown which has killed 29 of them this month, staged two public protests in southern towns earlier this week calling for the overthrow of President Mubarak's government.

Leaflets by Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman calling for revolution, distributed by Islamic Group militants in southern strongholds, have now been discovered in the northern Nile Delta, the Cairo newspaper Al Gomhuria reported Friday.

Police confiscated a printing press and 2,000 leaflets in eastern governorate and arrested a number of militants, the state-owned newspaper said. It gave no further details.

At least 116 people have been killed in political violence in the past year as militants attacked police, Christians and tourists and police hit back.

## Major voices concern over killing of Palestinians

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister John Major expressed his concern Thursday night over the killing of Palestinians by Israeli forces and warned of the growth of Islamic fundamentalism if the Mideast peace process fails.

In a speech at a dinner in London given by the board of deputies of British Jews. He said he knew the sort of "provocation" Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) are under in the occupied territories.

"Nobody is suggesting that they pursue a deliberate policy of violence," he said. But he added: "I would be at fault if I did not express my deep concern about the IDF's actions in the occupied territories."

"The death of over 20 children and young people since December, in shooting incidents involving the IDF, grievously undermines the case of Israel's friends, as I know you will recognise."

Mr. Major said failure of the Middle East peace process would encourage the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.

"We must therefore get all the parties back to the negotiating table, and urge them to pursue agreement while the opportunity is there," he said.

He said there was a window of opportunity but it would not remain open indefinitely.

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is there," he said. He warned: "Failure would carry risks and consequences which no responsible leader would wish to entertain."

"Failure would accentuate economic problems. It would risk greater political instability and widespread social unrest. It would provide fertile ground for fundamentalism and extremism."

"Fundamentalism is a dark cloud the world should watch carefully. As well as extremist movements, certain governments not involved in the peace process would like to fail and to capitalise on failure to increase their influence in the region."

He did not name the governments.

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"So far, only Israel has responded favourably to the co-sponsors' invitations to the further bilateral talks due to start in Washington on April 20," he noted.

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## U.S. begins show of force in Somali port

MOGADISHU (R) — Low-flying U.S. fighter planes kicked off an American military push Friday to block any attempt by one of Somalia's leading warlords to seize the southern Somali port of Kismayu.

"The show of force has begun and the overhead flights by Harrier jets and helicopters started early this morning over Kismayu," Chief Warrant Officer Eric Carlson told Reuters.

A 4,200-strong U.S. amphibious troop force set off from Mogadishu for Kismayu by sea Thursday following reports that warlord Omar Jess planned an offensive against dominant Kismayu warlord, Mohammad Said Hersi, also known as General Morgan.

A quick reaction force consisting of 500 troops, which returned from Kismayu Monday, is also on standby to move back into the port.

Kismayu has seen some of the worst clan fighting since a U.S.-led 23-nation force arrived in December to quash banditry and looting of famine relief aid to millions of Somalis.

But spokesman Carlson said the port appeared to be quiet early Friday and that no major incidents had been reported.

He expected the military operation to begin in earnest early Saturday. "The amphibious force is doing hydrographic surveys today and the operation will probably start in real earnest tomorrow," he said.

Nine hundred Belgian troops based in Kismayu have stepped up roadblocks and checkpoints in the region as part of a drive to create a weapons-free zone.

Gen. Morgan's forces stormed Kismayu last month and drove out thousands of Jess followers. The U.S. military, denying it supported Gen. Morgan, ordered his gunmen out and later said he had complied.

U.S. aircraft dropped off 200,000 leaflets in the Kismayu region this week, warning that anyone found carrying weapons would be considered a serious threat to peace.

"Somalis must choose peaceful ways to resolve their differences. Those who use force will be dealt with appropriately," the leaflets said.

Fighting in Kismayu last month spilled over into Mogadishu and the U.S. military tightened up security in the capital Friday.

The show of force by U.S. and Belgian troops is seen by political analysts as an attempt to prevent further disruption of Somali national reconciliation talks still going on in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

The talks were suspended for several days last week after Gen. Morgan's forces, using women and children as human shields, launched an attack on Jess supporters.

The 15 factions represented at the Addis Ababa talks are said to be nearing agreement on a transitional authority for Somalia, which has been without a government since the 1991 overthrow of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre — Gen. Morgan's father-in-law.

He said opposition claims of recent assassination attempts on supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani were lies designed to dishearten the people.

Iranian officials and media have reported a number of bombings in recent months, including explosions at oil wells in the south. They said last month a band of saboteurs sent from Iran had been arrested before carrying out any attacks.

Tehran blames most sabotage attacks and assassination on the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq group, which fights to overthrow Tehran's Islamic government from bases in Iran, Iraq's former war foe.

Ayatollah Jannati did not directly refer either to Iraq or the Mujahadeen, which teaches its supporters how to make simple bombs in its radio programmes beamed to Iran.

He said Washington was trying to build up pressure on Iran by linking it to last month's World Trade Centre bombing in New York which killed six people and wounded more than 1,000.

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## Kurds should define their goals, aspirations, scholars say

WASHINGTON (USA) — If the world's Kurdish population is to progress in its struggle for freedom, it must first define its priorities and present them clearly to prospective allies, according to political scientist Richard Falk of Princeton University.

The absence of a Kurdish state and the presence of large Kurdish populations in several countries in the Middle East and Europe have produced a situation both confusing and immensely complicated, said Dr. Falk, one of about two dozen experts who addressed the March 18-19 conference of the Badliye Centre for Kurdish Studies in Washington.

"Outsiders are not really clear on what is meant by Kurdish self-determination," said Dr. Falk. Among Kurds themselves, he added, there is some confusion over what their overarching goals ought to be.

At the conference, for example, a number of scholars and activists spoke confidently of a future "Kurdistan" or even "Greater Kurdistan" that would, presumably, be carved out of one or more existing states. Others dismissed the notion of reconfigured maps, and concentrated on the human and civil rights needs of Kurds in various countries.

The fragmentation has its roots in the unusual history of the Kurds. In the period after World War I, the mountainous region that they had inhabited for centuries was divided up among Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and the former Soviet Union. With an

estimated population of 20 to 30 million people, the Kurds are often described as "the world's largest nation without a state."

The past 70 years of Kurdish history have been punctuated by promises of greater freedom, recognition, autonomy — and even statehood — that were never fulfilled. As a minority population in several countries, Kurds have suffered varying degrees of marginalisation and outright repression.

Some of the experts suggested that this past is responsible for the conflicting goals and ideals of various Kurdish groups. Despite the Kurds' distinct language and culture, the partition of their land came at a "critical juncture and resulted in separate national experiences," believes Charles McDonald of Florida International University. "There is no significant pan-Kurdish movement," he said.

"I think of the Kurdish struggle as a series of distinct movements, each connected to a different state," Dr. Falk said.

At the same time, Dr. Falk told the conference participants that currently fluid ideas about self-determination might be conducive to a more unified movement, and perhaps the eventual creation of an independent Kurdish state.

He pointed out that the end of the cold war saw the rapid recognition of new states in the Balkans, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. Given Western sympathy for the plight of the Kurds — especially in Iraq — those precedents could be used to validate an independence movement, Dr. Falk said.

But he underlined that self-determination is an ambiguous concept, and that the Kurds themselves have not fixed on a definition.

"It is overwhelmingly up to the Kurds themselves to clear up this ambiguity and state their claims clearly to the rest of the world," Dr. Falk said.

One of the more sensitive issues discussed during the conference dealt with the very notion of changed maps. For the most part, speakers of Kurdish origin supported that possibility — with one notable exception. Dr. Barham Salih, a representative of the Kurdish parliament in northern Iraq, reaffirmed that his group is committed maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity.

Iraqi Kurds, he said, have a clear and unifying vision, and it is "that the future should be different from the past." To that end, they have used their protected status in northern Iraq to develop an open, democratic system within the borders of Iraq.

Nicolas Normand, a political officer at the French embassy in Washington, stressed that while his government is strongly supportive of the experiment in northern Iraq, he believes that the possibility of creating a Kurdish state there is "unrealistic."

Among other factors, Turkey is extremely unlikely to accept an independent Kurdish state next door.

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## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO  
18:00 Les Aventures de L'espace  
18:30 Envoyé Spécial  
19:00 News in French  
19:15 France sur  
19:30 News in Hebrew  
20:00 News in Arabic  
20:30 Super Bloops  
21:00 Perspectives  
21:30 Doc: "Space on Earth"  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 Feature Film: "Tel Me No Lie"

### PRAYER TIMES

04:10 Fajr  
05:27 (Sunrise) Dhuhr  
11:41 Dhuhr  
15:11 Asr  
17:55 Maghreb  
19:13 Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swartholm, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 623785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757  
Terrence Church Tel. 623666  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331



## King celebrates 'Eid Al Fitr at Hashemieh Mosque

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Life in the private and public sectors will go back to normal in Jordan Saturday following the five-day 'Eid Al Fitr holiday which ended the holy month of Ramadan.

The feast was celebrated by religious ceremonies in mosques around the country on the first day of the 'Eid Wednesday.

The main celebration, attended by His Majesty King Hussein and Royal Family members, was held at Al Hashemieh Mosque, and the sermon focused on the significance of the feast.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ahmad Helayel paid tribute to the King for his dedication to restoring Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and his continued drive to safeguard the holy places in the occupied lands.

Deputy Premier and Education Minister Thugan Al Hindawi, the speakers of both Houses of Parliament, senior government officials and high ranking army officers were among worshippers attending the ceremony with His Majesty.

Following the prayers, the King visited the tombs of King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and King Talal Ben Abdullah.

His Majesty also laid a wreath at the tomb of Queen Alia.

King Hussein received well-wishers at Raghadan Palace on the occasion of the 'Eid.

The King also exchanged cables of good wishes with heads of Arab and Muslim nations.

The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and his continued drive to safeguard the holy places in the occupied lands.

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His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday attends 'Eid Al Fitr services at Al Hashemieh Mosque. The King is accompanied here by Their Royal Highnesses Princesses Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Faisal Ben Al Hussein, Ali Ben Al Hussein and Ghazi Ben

## EC group to visit Amman, and hold discussions on resuming peace negotiations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A four-member delegation from the European Community (EC) is due in Amman by the end of March to discuss the Arab-Israeli peace talks with Jordanian leaders, according to Renato Batti, head of the EC delegation in Amman.

Mr. Batti told the Jordan Times Friday that the foreign ministers of Britain, Denmark and Belgium, as well as Hans Van Den Broek of the EC Council will visit Amman, Damascus and Beirut before going to Israel.

The aim of their visits is to hold discussions to promote the peace process.

The EC delegation members will also hold talks with the Palestinian side to the peace talks and will declare their support for the U.S.-Russian-sponsored peace negotiations, said Mr. Batti.

Reuters reported Friday that the EC team will meet a top level Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) team in Jordan when they tour the Middle East next week.

Haider Abdul Shafi, the chief Palestinian peace negotiator and Farouk Al Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's Foreign Affairs Department, would meet the EC officials in Amman on March 31.

Reuters said.

Dr. Abdul Shafi, who arrived here Friday on his way to Damascus to take part in the meetings of Arab countries involved in the peace talks, told Reuters the Palestinians wanted the EC to play a more active role in Middle East peace process by prodding Israel to drop its hardline stand in the talks.

"The European position is still below what we hope," he said. "It is still a position that is content with declarations," Dr. Abdul Shafi added. "We want the European position to translate itself to practical measures that will commit Israel to revoke its intransigent positions (in the peace talks)."

Mr. Batti said, at present, there is some hesitation regarding the peace process because of the dispute over the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the repatriation of the Palestinians expelled by Israel to southern Lebanon more than three months ago.

It is hoped that the delegation's talks in the Arab states and in Israel will urge the concerned parties to resume the negotiations by April 20 in Washington and find solutions to the Arab-Israeli problems, Mr. Batti added.

Asked whether the delegation will be discussing economic matters or EC aid to Jordan, Mr. Batti said the tour is strictly dedicated to the peace process and means to help the two sides resume their negotiations next month.

Mr. Batti noted that the delegation's visit will come close on the heels of the Arab foreign ministers meeting in Damascus to discuss a concerted Arab stand vis-a-vis the resumption of the peace talks and the current talks between a Palestinian delegation and the U.S. administration.

Mr. Batti's statement came in the wake of an official announcement in Brussels about the EC delegation's tour of the region which stated that talks with the Arabs and the Israelis could remove the Arab hesitation to go to Washington to resume the negotiations.

A Palestinian delegation Thursday left for Washington at the invitation of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Heading the delegation is Faisal Husseini, who was quoted as saying that the talks with the U.S. administration will aim at overcoming obstacles still impeding the resumption of the peace talks.

Mr. Husseini is accompanied by official Spokesperson of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, Hanan Ashrawi, and delegates Ghassan Khatib, Nabil Rassis and Zahera Kamal.

## Regional energy minister to sign link-up agreements

By Elia Nasrallah Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Energy ministers from Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Egypt are scheduled to meet in Amman in June to sign final cooperation agreements in energy-related fields.

Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Director General Mohammad Arafah told the Jordan Times Friday that a technical committee representing the five countries will convene in Amman in May to prepare for the June ministerial meeting.

The ministers are expected to endorse the committee's decisions and sign two agreements for power trading and interconnection projects which would be implemented by 1986, Mr. Arafah said.

Ministers from the five countries last met in Damascus, in October 1992 and initially approved the ambitious plan to link their electricity networks.

According to Mr. Arafah, the three-day ministerial meetings should result in approval of the Egyptian-Jordanian interconnection project of \$200 million, the Jordanian-Syrian project of \$150 million and the Syrian-Turkish project of \$250 million.

No figures were yet released on the cost of Iraq's linkage with the group, Mr. Arafah said. He added that the projects are of vital importance to the five countries.

Mr. Arafah said the Kuwait-based Arab Islamic Development Bank have promised to extend loans to the concerned governments in order to help them implement these projects.

He said that KAFESD's Director General Abdul Latif Al Hamad had promised to sign agreements for the loans once the ministers of the five governments had finalized their own agreements and signed them.

Following the Damascus meeting in October, the Syrian minister of electricity, Kamel Al Baba, was quoted as saying that the differences in climate and consequent differences in power consumption would allow the countries with surplus to supply others.

Mr. Baba said that as a second stage, the Arab countries would be linked to European grids through Turkey and that Maghreb Arab countries would be linked with the original five states via Egypt.

Other African states could also join the network, Mr. Baba said. Asked about the cost to be shouldered by Jordan, Mr. Arafah said that Jordan and Egypt are already involved in an interlinkage project and Jordan has acquired a \$35 million loan from the Arab Fund to carry out its share.

But no exact figures were available for the cost of the Jordanian-Syrian part of the project, Mr. Arafah said. He added, that the major part of the Syrian-Jordanian interlinkage will be in Syrian territory.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday visits with children at Jordan's SOS villages in Amman and Aqaba on the first day of 'Eid Al Fitr (Petra photo)



## Queen visits SOS villages on 'Eid

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday visited the Jordanian SOS Children's Villages in Amman and Aqaba and took part in celebrating the first day of the 'Eid Al Fitr feast, marking the end of Ramadan.

Queen Noor, who was accompanied on the two visits by their Royal Highnesses Prince Hamzah, Prince Hashem, Princess Iman, and Princess Raya, in addition to Director of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) In'am Al Mufti, distributed presents to children staying at the two villages.

The Aqaba village, established in 1991, is considered an extension of the children's SOS villages in Jordan and is basically financed through grants offered by the Hermann-Gmeiner Fund and the Industrial Development Bank, as well as assistance extended from abroad.

The village currently houses 27 children, and can accommodate 72 children.

The Amman village was established in 1986 through support from Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor to help orphaned children.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled the Memory of Silk, displaying traditional Jordanian and Palestinian costumes, shawls, carpets, pottery, copperware, from the Wildad Kassar collection. — at the French Cultural Centre.

### THEATRE

★ Play entitled "The Death of Thebes" at the Royal Cultural Centre's main theatre at 8 p.m.

## S. Africa

(Continued from page 1)

sent 90 scientists to America during the same period.

Also, the U.S. manufacturing firm Alice Chalmers sold South Africa its first nuclear reactor, which became operational in 1967, Mr. Minty said.

Mr. De Klerk's admissions came about largely because of pressure by the U.S. government, said Mr. Minty, who gave a news conference at the headquarters of the African National Congress (ANC), the leading black opposition group.

The ANC has praised U.S. president Bill Clinton's administration, saying it demanded such a public disclosure from South Africa when Foreign Minister P. W. Botha visited Washington recently.

"Why didn't the U.S. put pressure on South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s?" asked Mr. Minty.

He suggested that U.S. officials, along with the De Klerk government, have become increasingly nervous about the prospect of a left-leaning black government getting its hands on nuclear weapons.

Mr. De Klerk says he wants a multi-racial election next year, and the ANC is the overwhelming favourite. The ANC favours making Africa a nuclear-free zone, but its allies include such U.S. foes as Libya and Cuba.

The United States could have forced South Africa's hand much sooner, Mr. Minty said. U.S.

satellites detected a flash, thought to be a nuclear test, off the country's southern coast in 1979, but the information was not made public until it was leaked out much later.

South Africa says it never tested its nuclear weapons. But Mr. Minty said the country was collaborating with Israel during the 1979 test as part of a long-standing nuclear exchange.

Most media accounts have said mineral-rich South Africa provided the enriched uranium while Israel helped provide technology.

Mr. Minty also said South Africa received substantial aid from Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s, mostly through the exchange of scientists. He said Waldo Stumpf, the current head of South Africa's Atomic Energy Corporation, worked with the Germans during this period.

The French, meanwhile, helped build South Africa's nuclear power plant at Koeberg, in the western Cape province.

"It is laughable for Mr. De Klerk to state that South Africa developed its nuclear weapons capability without outside help," said Roger Jardine, who handles technological affairs for the ANC.

South Africa's past secrecy and refusal to submit to international inspections have raised suspicions the country could still hold weapons-grade fuel or possibly even weapons.

Various reports have estimated that South Africa developed as much as 300 kilograms of enriched uranium.

## Rock'n roll on campus

AMMAN (J.T.) — The rock'n roll duo of Billy Stevens and Scott Ainslie will perform on Jordanian university campuses in Amman and Mu'tah between March 28-31.

Hosted by the University of Jordan, Royal Jordanian (RJ) and the American Cultural Centre in Amman, the two-man band

will entertain young Jordanian audiences with a varied repertoire of rock'n roll and blues music.

The first performance will take place Sunday at 4 p.m. in the Prince Hassan Ben Talal Auditorium at the University of Jordan.



Billy Stevens



Scott Ainslie

## Restaurant & Tapas Bar



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## Despite high female enrollment at some educational stages, expanded efforts are needed to upgrade women's standing

AMMAN (J.T.) — Secretary

General of the Ministry of Education Munther Al Masri said 95.9 of female students in the age group 6-16 years were enrolled in all educational stages at schools in the Kingdom last year, against 92.6 per cent of male students of the same age group, but women's illiteracy is more than double that of males.

In paper presented at a recent seminar on women's issues and education, under the chairmanship of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, Dr. Masri said the percentage of girls below school age registered at kindergartens was 18.5 per cent while boys accounted for 20.5 per cent.

In the secondary stages, Dr. Masri said, 66 per cent of females older than 16 years were registered at schools, while the same percentage for males was 65.6.

Dr. Masri said despite all breakthroughs in girls' education in Jordan, there were still some obstacles that ought to be removed, particularly those facing rural girls.

Some of these obstacles, Dr. Masri maintained, are social, related to norms and traditions; and some are psychological, dealing with the way women view themselves and their role in the society.

Other factors, he added, are economic, such as poverty, unemployment and the low income of some families.

Dr. Masri admitted that some of the impediments facing girls' education pertain to the lack of educational facilities in certain areas of the Kingdom, coupled with the absence of counselling and guidance services.

All these obstacles contribute to raising the percentage of girl dropouts from schools and their early marriages, he said.

On vocational education, Dr. Masri said a total of 8,600 girls were enrolled in various vocational schools around the Kingdom, compared to 16,400 male students at similar schools.

He pointed out that there is a large difference between the number of girls and boys studying at vocational schools, where girls constitute a third of the total number of students enrolled in this branch of education.

He said girls enrollment in vocational training is predominantly in the nursing, household economy and commerce streams with few studying.

In his working paper, Dr. Masri also said that the total number of girls studying at community colleges reached 57 per cent of the total number of students at these colleges, pointing out that the numbers of female students is high in educational and academic specialisations and low in vocational branches.

He said the total number of girls graduating from Jordanian universities last year was 46 per cent of the total number of graduates, which he described as high compared to international figures.

In the post-graduate stage, the number of female students drops to 20 per cent of the total number of students at this level, he said.

This factor has its effects on the number of females teaching at community colleges and universities, as well as those working in scientific research fields, Dr. Masri said. He said the number of females teaching at Jordanian universities stands at 14 per cent of the total number, and at community colleges it rises to 25 per cent.

Concerning the illiteracy problem among females, Dr. Masri said it remains a sizeable problem.

In 1992, he said, the percentage of illiteracy among females stood at 25 per cent, compared to 12 per cent for males.

Dr. Masri said, in 1979, illiteracy rates among women were 50 per cent, pointing out that the concerned authorities' efforts in eradicating illiteracy should be doubled, and that rules making education mandatory at the basic educational level are followed by parents.

He added that expanded efforts are needed to support the Ministry of Education policies which aim to reduce the current illiteracy rate from 18 per cent in 1992 to 8 per cent by the year 2000; and for girls from 25 per cent to 10 per cent.

## AVIS A TOUS LES CITYOYENS CANADIENS RESIDANT EN JORDANIE

LA SECTION CONSULAIRE DE L'AMBASSADE DU CANADA A RECEMMENT ENVOYE UNE LETTRE A TOUS (TE) LES CANADIEN(NE)S EN JORDANIE QUI SONT ACTUELLEMENT INSCRIT(E)S DANS NOTRE REGISTRE A L'AMBASSADE. SI VOUS N'AVEZ PAS RECU UNE TELLE LETTRE, VOUS ET VOTRE FAMILLE N'ETES PAS INSCRITS A L'AMBASSADE.

NOUS PRIONS TOUT CANADIEN RESIDANT EN JORDANIE QUI N'A PAS RECU UNE TELLE LETTRE DE CONTACTER L'AMBASSADE DU CANADA, SECTION CONSULAIRE, SHMEISANI, AMMAN, SOIT EN PERSONNE, SOIT PAR ECRIT (CP 815403, AMMAN) POUR VOUS INSCRIRE DES QUE POSSIBLE.

## Attention all Canadian citizens residing in Jordan

The consular section of the Canadian Embassy in Amman has recently sent letters to all Canadians in Jordan who are currently registered with the embassy.

If you have not received such a letter, you and your family are not registered with the embassy.

All Canadians residing in Jordan who did not receive such a letter are urged to contact the Canadian Embassy, Consular Section, Shmeisani, Amman either personally or in writing (P.O. Box 815403, Amman) to register at your earliest convenience.

Jordan Times Tel: 667171



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1975  
الصحف الاردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالانجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:  
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:  
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:  
GEORGE S. HAWATMEI

Editorial and advertising offices:  
Jordan Press Foundation,  
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 67041-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

## Period for reflection

TOMORROW'S SESSION of the Lower House could be the 11th Parliament's last. An extraordinary session seems to be off the cards since neither the government nor the deputies seem to be interested in holding one. Indications then are that the country will have a new government soon that would be entrusted with holding elections for the 12th Parliament which would subsequently convene sometime in the fall. That would leave the political scene almost dry apart from the electioneering campaign which will not be short of slogans and bickering. In essence this means that the rest of this year will be written off in terms of producing any legislation that would add to democratic progress. The incoming government whether it is the incumbent one, with a major reshuffle, or a totally new government, will have very little to worry about, save for the biting rhetoric of some candidates.

One major accomplishment that has eluded the 11th Parliament and our democratisation process as a whole is the fact that a great deal of time has been wasted in making new legislation and not enough days and session allotted to doing other parliamentary business. The days in which Parliament does business have been very few and they were usually occupied by meaningless correspondence with the government, mostly over petty issues.

We would hope then that the 12th Parliament would devote more of its time to reforming the ways and methods by which the two estates of state function and interact. Furthermore the country — like the whole region which is passing through a delicate process of change — needs an all-encompassing vision of the direction and methods by which to lead it through the difficult times towards a stable and prosperous future. The post-1989 governments have basically achieved two major objectives: Containing Parliament and the economic crisis. Parliament, however, has achieved probably only one thing, namely the abolishing of martial laws. All the other strides that Jordan has made in its quest for democracy are those of His Majesty the King. In fact the King's vision for a new Jordan seems to be way ahead of the both government's and Parliament's reach.

Despite the long time that separates us from the 12th Parliament, we sincerely hope that the upcoming Chamber of Deputies would have more sober leaders with clear vision and very little "ministerial" ambitions who place the future and well-being of Jordan above their own.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

INSTEAD OF considering measures to reach peace with the Arabs and the Palestinians their right to end the cycle of violence in the occupied Arab lands, the Israeli government has sought to further repressive measures that are bound to escalate tension, said Al Dostour Arabic daily. The recent spate of killings of both sides has no doubt caused the Israeli society to become more worried; and the continued confrontation between the troops and the Palestinian resistance forces has become an obsession for the two sides, the paper said. However, instead of defusing the situation and dealing reasonably with the violence, the Israeli government chose to step up repression against the intifada in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through further demolition of homes and killing of young Palestinian activists, said the daily. Despite the Israeli arrogance and the policy of terror, and despite the arming of Israeli citizens to attack the Arab population, we are confident that such policies and crimes will not last for a long time, especially because the Palestinians are determined to pursue the fight and the Arab population are determined to achieve freedom, the paper continued. It said that Israel is living a real crisis because it continues to face the intifada against occupation, and the Israeli leaders realise that, sooner or later, they will have to consider the option of peace based on justice so that the Israeli society can live in security alongside the Arab people of Palestine and the Arab World surrounding the Jewish state.

Columnist in Al Ra'i daily commented on Eid Al Fitr feast, which coincided with a new upsurge of violence in the occupied Arab lands. The feast comes once again this year while the wounds of the victims of the occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are still bleeding, said Salah Jarar. The writer said the feast comes once again to see the Arab people of Palestine involved in fierce fighting against the occupation forces and the people in a state of grief over their fallen martyrs in the occupied Arab territories, where the Israeli force have been causing suffering to the innocent population. On the other side of the Arab World, we continue to witness American forces besieging the Iraqi population and causing more sufferings for the Iraqi women and children during the feast and throughout the past three years, the writer said. He said that the feast used to bring with it gifts and toys to the children of Palestine and Iraq, but this year, and due to the Israeli occupation and the American aggression, innocent children continue to face the bullets and the shells of the aggressors. For a quarter of a century now, the Palestinians have been facing acts of terrorism and the crimes of the Israeli forces and settlers; and for the past three years, the Iraqis have been exposed to aggression on all sides, he added. The writer said this long dark tunnel must have an end, and the offerings of the Palestinians and the Iraqis ought to end so that the children can once again rejoice over their gifts and the joyful occasion.

By Naseer Aruri

THE FLIGHT of the 396 Palestinians stranded in Lebanon since Dec. 17, 1992 is slowly being removed from the international agenda. The range of discourse on the subject was between those who viewed the expulsion as a pre-emptive measure designed to prevent further attacks by Islamic activists on Israeli soldiers, and others who saw it as a form of retaliation and/or a show of force by the Rabin government to appease the Israeli Public.

In either case, the assumption is that there is an underlying threat — "terrorist" to be sure, but a special kind, bearing the new label of Islamic fundamentalism. Such a "threat" will continue to provide the ideological framework for Israeli retaliation and intervention. The syndrome is firmly entrenched in the political culture and the two dominant blocs — Likud and Labour — usually try to outdo each other in meeting the challenge.

Responding to criticism by right-wing members of the Knesset, and aware of public opinion polls showing that 78 per cent of Israelis supported the expulsion, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin boasted on Feb. 8 to a BBC correspondent:

"We knew we were making an unprecedented move. Which government in the past 20 years was prepared to expel or remove temporarily 25, not to mention 400 people? I felt at the time a need to level an immediate, tough blow against Hamas that went beyond everything done previously. I achieved that aim, whether it involved 300 or 400."

Such boasting hardly masks the siege mentality which Mr. Rabin himself had asked Israelis to shed upon assuming office last July: "We must overcome the sense of isolation that has held us in its thrall for almost a half century," he said. It also reflects a grotesque sense of proportionality, whereby 400 Palestinians are summarily ejected to a makeshift mountain camp in the middle of winter in retaliation for the killing of four Israeli soldiers. Worse yet is the fact that in the six months since Mr. Rabin became prime minister, the death toll among Palestinians killed by Israelis is on the increase. According to the Israeli human rights organisation B'tselem, security forces shot dead 76 Palestinians between August 1992 and January 1993. In contrast to 63 dead during the first six months of 1992. During the same period the number of Palestinian children killed soared from six to 17.

Applying Mr. Rabin's criteria for retaliation and/or pre-emption, one could speculate about the number of expellees required to placate Israeli public opinion — 40,000 or perhaps 400,000 — had these death statistics during Mr. Rabin's latest tenure been Israeli not Palestinian. Or one could also speculate, as did the Houston Chronicle on Feb. 7, about the world's reaction to a similar atrocity committed against Israelis by Palestinians:

"What would have happened if the Palestinians had held 415 Israelis hostage for over a month in a cold and barren no man's land with nothing but tents to shelter in? What would Israel have done if the Palestinians had held their hostages over holidays

and said they would not be allowed to go home unless they agreed to end their occupation of Arab land? What would those in human rights circles have done from Washington to London — if not one of these hostages had been given any sort of trial before being deported from their land and dumped in the cold? What would the press have said if they were submitted to intermittent showers of snow and artillery?"

### The demographic battle

That 1,600 Palestinian natives can be quickly rounded up and in a few hours 413 of them are blindfolded, handcuffed and bused to the Lebanese border, without charge, trial or any semblance of due process, is ominous enough. But the act itself represents a new dimension for Israel's expulsion policy and is intended to set a precedent in Israel's demographic battle with the Palestinians.

Unlike the mass expulsions of 1948 and 1967, which took place under the cover of armed conflict, and unlike those of 1989-90, which were executed bureaucratically on the pretext of improper residency. The December 1992 expulsion is the first mass expulsion to be carried out explicitly in the name of security. Dec. 16, 1992, Prime Minister Rabin, who also holds the defence ministry portfolio, issued authorisation No. 97 granting military commanders in the occupied territories the authority to expel inciters. Almost simultaneously the required "legal" machinery was set up with the issuance of Military Order 1086, and the expulsion was carried out in accordance with the instant legislation.

This "legalisation" has amended a previous rule, which allowed those subject to expulsion orders the right of appeal to

a military committee and then the Supreme Court. In fact such appeals never succeed: The Israeli Supreme Court has never overturned an expulsion order. Surely Yitzhak Rabin, a veteran of expulsions, having "removed" some 55,000 residents of Ramleh and Jaffa in 1948 (a small portion of the 800,000 Palestinians who became refugees) and having served as the army chief of staff in 1967 when about 300,000 were "removed" to Jordan, is seeking new horizons in the policy of acquiring more land and less people. This would be congruent with his latest diplomatic offer in the stalled "peace process," which envisions a division of the occupied land into three sectors — Palestinian, Israeli, and one to be negotiated. If he is able to expel 400 and get away with it, then what is to prevent him from expelling larger numbers the next time?

The cumulative impact of such expulsions on the political future of the Palestinians would be devastating. The 413 who were expelled last December include a high number of career professionals, businessmen and students. In addition, the thousands of Palestinians who were expelled since 1967 represent a high percentage of qualified people. An escalation of this mass expulsion for security reasons, as Mr. Rabin threatens, could deprive the Palestinians of a large number of their future administrators, engineers, scientists and even negotiators.

### Hoodwinking the Americans

The damage is likely to be further compounded by American acceptance of Mr. Rabin's latest acts. In fact Mr. Rabin wasted no time in claiming a

major victory when he struck a deal with the Clinton administration on Feb. 1. According to the "compromise," Washington agreed to shield Israel from imminent sanctions in the Security Council in exchange for Israel's agreement to allow 101 of the deportees to return immediately while keeping the other 295 in exile for one year.

After Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced the agreement, saying that Israel's move should end U.N. involvement in the issue and promising that the U.S. "will prevent any decisions in international forums that would have operational significance against Israel," Mr. Rabin described the agreement as a "package deal," and asserted that it preserved "the principle of our ability to remove for a limited time hundreds of inciters, leaders and organisers." Although the Clinton administration did not cherish being characterised as an accomplice by Mr. Rabin, no U.S. official has disavowed the attribution.

Worse yet from Washington's standpoint are Mr. Rabin's leaked boasting that he was able to hoodwink the Americans. According to Agence France Presse (Feb. 7) Mr. Rabin boasted: "I've made a great deal with the Americans." When asked about the Palestinians' rejection of the deal, he was reported to have said: "It's no longer my problem... No it's Clinton's problem. He can stew in his own juices. I wanted a deal with the Americans and I've got one... the reaction of the expelled Palestinians does not interest me, it never has."

It remains to be seen whether the Arab parties to the Middle East negotiations will fall in line and "get on with the business," as both Israeli and U.S. officials have predicted, or stand firm on

the legal and humanitarian issue. If they can be drawn to the negotiations by U.S.-Israeli machinations, the whatever credibility they have left among both constituents and protagonists will most likely dissipate even as rapidly as the negotiations' chances of success under the Madrid formula.

Israel has a vested interest in the negotiations, whose framework is supplied and designed in such a way as to exclude a full restoration of occupied territories and Palestinian national rights. Israel also has a vested interest in assuring control of the demographic balance in historic Palestine, the crux of the matter. For Israel, establishing the right to carry out mass expulsions for security reasons, in addition to expulsions in time of armed conflict and expulsions conducted bureaucratically on an ongoing basis, will serve to enhance its demographic objective.

This brings us back to the core issue in the current controversy over the expulsions. Demography, like land and water, is at the heart of the Palestine-Israel conflict. The fact the Palestinians, who constituted more than two thirds of the population of mandated Palestine on the eve of Israel's creation in 1948, now constitute around 40 per cent, despite a birth rate of more than double that of Israelis, is in itself a manifestation of a cardinal principle of Zionism to acquire the land without the people.

### U.S. complicity in an illegal act

The Israeli strategy of enlisting U.S. support for that principle is of course well known. But having succeeded in getting the Clinton administration to effectively acquiesce in a new dimension of

Israel's expulsion policy is unprecedented. This is not to imply that the Reagan and Bush administrations have been promoters of peace and justice, but they did adhere to the principle that expulsion from occupied territories was illegal. The U.S. departure from this principle, which the Rabin-Christopher "compromise" of Feb. 1 implies, explains the Israeli prime minister's glee.

While the first action on the Middle East by the Clinton administration reveals a tangible tilt towards Israel, the surprising thing is the extent to which the administration has already deviated from the standard U.S. position on expulsion from occupied territories.

No less important is the departure from international law, which has been touted repeatedly in the conflict with Iraq. During the past year, the U.S. government had at least two occasions to express its position on this question. Voting in favour of Security Council Resolution 726 on Jan. 6, 1992, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Thomas Pickering said:

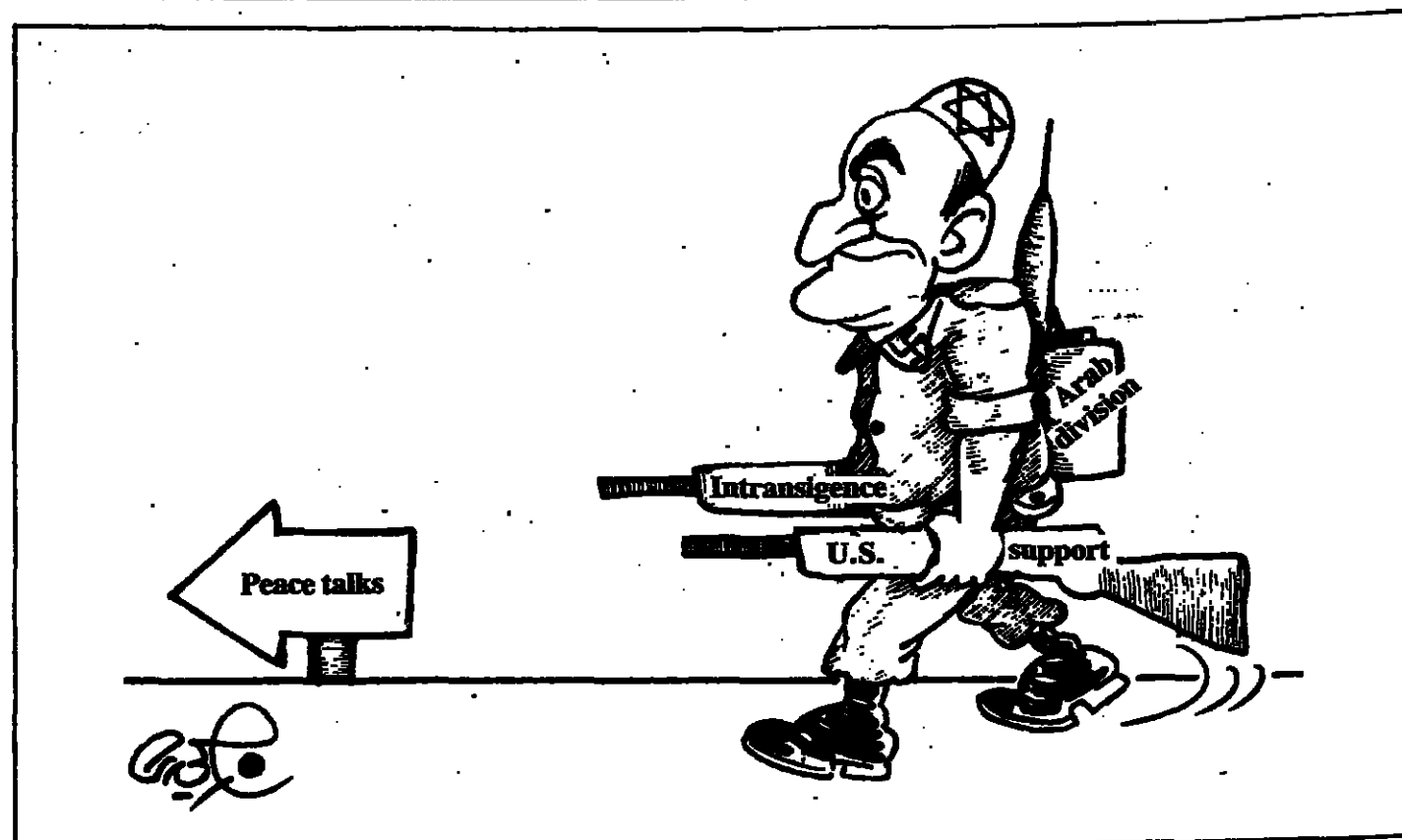
"The U.S. government believes that deportation of individuals from the occupied territories is a violation of Article 49 of the Geneva Convention... Any persons charged with wrongdoing should be brought before a court of law based on the evidence and be given a fair trial, which would afford a full judicial process."

As late as Dec. 18 1992, then Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger reaffirmed the U.S. position, which considered expulsions a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Article 49 prohibits absolutely "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations... regardless of their motive." Deportations are also a form of collective punishment which is expressly prohibited by Article 33 and are specifically cited as a "grave breach" or a war crime punishable under the Convention in Article 147. Moreover, Article 146 places specific duties on states party to the convention to suppress grave breaches by prosecuting the perpetrators. The latter requirement is significant in the light of the U.S.-Israeli "compromise" of Feb. 1, which makes the U.S. as a party to the convention, an accomplice in an illegal act.

Contrary to the claim made by Mr. Christopher that the Israeli offer to repatriate 101 out of 400 Palestinians is "consistent with Resolution 799," that repatriation in fact made no exceptions or exemptions. The resolution did not establish new categories of permissible expulsion, partial expulsion, or temporary expulsion, as absurdly implied in that process, which in Mr. Christopher's view made it "unnecessary for the matter to come before the Security Council for further action."

It demanded the "immediate repatriation" of all the expellees. The prohibition of deportation in international law is categorical. Therefore, the departure of the Clinton administration from the requirements of international law as well as from longstanding U.S. policy amounts to rewarding Israel for carrying out an illegal act. So much for the U.S. as the guardian of international legality.

Middle East International



## The implications of U.S. support for Israel

### THE WEEK IN PRINT

## Ending the silence about the expellees

Reviewed by Elias Nasrallah

THE LOCAL press last week gave prominence to the upcoming meeting in Damascus by foreign ministers of Arab countries involved in the peace process, the situation in the occupied Arab lands and domestic affairs.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab warned the Arab parties not to remain passive vis-a-vis Israel's expulsion of about 400 Palestinians to southern Lebanon.

Keeping silent about the expellees and accepting a resumption of the negotiations before the Palestinians' repatriation means that the Arabs and the Palestinians accept Israel's present inhuman policies and its drive to evacuate the Arabs from their homeland, warned Salameh Elkour. The writer said that the meeting in Damascus later this month should discuss a resumption of the peace process in the light of the developments of the expellees and ought to take a unified stand insisting that U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 be implemented in full.

The Arabs are convinced that Syria will not conclude a separate peace treaty with Israel over the occupied Golan Heights because Damascus realises that the Egyptian-Israeli treaty achieved nothing for the Arabs and fell short of fulfilling the Palestinian people's aspirations, said

Mahmoud Rimawi in Al Ra'i. The writer said that Israel and the United States have been seeking a separate solution with Syria, promising Damascus huge amounts of aid coming from Washington, Europe and the Gulf. He said that Damascus is right to hold on to a comprehensive peace on all fronts since separate deals achieve nothing concrete for the Arabs.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily warned Palestinians not to rely on promises given by the U.S. administration concerning the repatriation of the expellees or the end of the occupation of Palestinian land. Tareq Masarweh said that there is nothing that can change Washington's biased stand towards Israel, which recently received \$10 billion in guarantees to build its settlements in Palestinian lands. The writer said that the Palestinians have only their own intifada to rely on because resistance is the only card they can play in the face of occupation and in dealing with the conspiracies being hatched against them.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said that Israel has displayed its hostility towards peace in every way. The current escalation of repression against the Palestinians is a clear indication of Israel's total rejection of Arab demands for the recognition of the Palestinian people's rights in their homeland,

said the paper. Saleh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dostour, said that Israel's contemplation of withdrawing from the Gaza Strip resulted from the pressure caused by the intifada. He said contrary to the claims that such withdrawal can cause disturbances in the Gaza Strip, it would mark the beginning of the total withdrawal from all the Arab territories although such move can be achieved in degrees. "We are sure that no civil war will erupt in Gaza or the occupied West Bank should the Israelis withdraw from any part of the occupied lands," said the writer.

Sawt Al Shaab daily turned its attention to Iraq and said that during the Holy Month of Ramadan, the Arab and Islamic countries ought to have terminated the sanctions on the Iraqi people and saved them untold sufferings. The paper said that while the United States is ordering Turkey to reduce the flow of the Euphrates River to Iraq in order to deprive its people of food and means to irrigate their land, the U.S.-led coalition, backed by Arab and Islamic states, continue to impose unjust siege on the Iraqi people, causing thousands to die.

Taber Al Udwan also discussed Iraq and said that the U.S. administration is trying to find pretexts to extend the present sanctions on Iraq. U.S. Secret-

ary of State Warren Christopher visited the Arab region in order not to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict but rather to ensure continued Arab backing for the sanctions on the Iraqi people. The writer said that while the Iraqis are steadfast in the face of the aggressions, those Arab states plotting against Baghdad will soon find themselves facing the danger of instability and insecurity and will face total collapse.

Abdul Rahim Omar said that the Socialist President of France Francois Mitterrand has faced defeat in the elections due to his policies in general and failure to live up to the aspirations of the French people. The writer said that in the Gulf war Mr. Mitterrand forced France to fight an American war and to defend American interests in the Gulf but he failed to secure for France any fruits of such policy. Furthermore, he said, France, under the Socialists, has lost its European role in world affairs and lost its credibility in the Arab World.

Arafat Hijazi in Sawt Al Shaab turned his attention to Islamic fundamentalism and said that the worshippers during Ramadan and the hundreds of thousands of Muslims praying at the holy sites in Jerusalem on Fridays show that the Muslims are not terrorists but rather pious people

determined to protect their holy places and ready to die in the fight against the aggressors. The writer said while the Zionists and the Americans continue to claim that the Muslims are terrorists, the Muslim people, whether fundamentalists or not, are determined to show that they fear nothing in their drive to protect Al Aqsa Mosque and will fight the enemy by all means.

The questions of Islamists and their activities in the Arab World was discussed by Mona Shuqair in Al Dostour.

It is widely believed that Iran is behind the spread of the Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab World, especially in Sudan, Algeria and Egypt. It could be that Iran continues to provide help to the Islamists but such support and financial aid can by no means create a whole political current that is now sweeping the three countries and causing deep changes in social life, the writer said.

"What we have to realise is that the drastic political, social and cultural changes should not be equated with terrorism because they are reactions to developments in the region and to injustice," said the writer. Islamic fundamentalism, she added, is a manifestation of a rejection of plots and plans that contradict with the Arab history and Arab national interests, and it is a demonstra-

tion of rejection of the continued suffering and an opposition to the so-called new world order which entails terrorism for the Arab World.

Hamadeh Faraaneh, a columnist in Al Dostour expressed support for the Islamic Action Front's rejection of all forms of terrorism as voiced by the party's Secretary General Ishaq Al Farhan. He said that the front calls on the Arab governments to stop its acts of terrorism against the people and to opt for democracy and dialogue to settle the political disputes, said the writer. He said that such ideas can serve as a common denominator for all the political parties in Jordan because they all support such ideas and they all renounce terrorism but support the continued struggle against the Zionists and the colonialists who try to distort the image of Islam.

Discussing the recent government decision to raise the salaries of civil servants and the Armed Forces personnel, Ahmad Dabbas, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, said that it is hoped the government would now take appropriate measures to prevent any rise in the prices of various commodities. The raise in salary was vital to improve the living conditions of employees but this raise should not be swallowed up by increases in prices, he said.





## Only one suspect loose, FBI says

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kaisi surrendered for questioning Wednesday night. He appeared in court Thursday afternoon and entered no plea to charges of aiding and abetting the bombing. He was ordered held for a bail hearing Tuesday.

An FBI complaint linked Mr. Kaisi to Mr. Ayyad, and said a search at Mr. Ayyad's home turned up a time delay firing device for explosives, "consistent with timing mechanisms used in other terrorist bombs."

But James Fox, head of the FBI's New York office, said there was no indication the bombing was the start of a "terrorist" campaign.

Court papers said Mr. Kaisi also had an American Express card listing Mr. Ayyad's address, and that Mr. Kaisi was seen in the area of a Jersey City shed used to hold bomb ingredients.

Mr. Kaisi shared a Jersey City apartment with suspect Mohammad Salameh shortly before the blast, said an investigator who spoke on condition of anonymity. Mr. Salameh allegedly rented the van used to carry the bomb into a parking garage beneath the trade centre.

The investigator said Mr. Kaisi, who worked as a salesman for an import company, also shared bank accounts with both Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad. Mr. Esposito of the FBI in New Jersey said Mr. Kaisi attended services at a Brooklyn mosque where Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman preached. Other suspects in the bombing have similar links to Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who is suspected of fostering extremism in his native Egypt and is fighting deportation from the United States.

Hours before Mr. Kaisi's arrest, another suspect Mahmoud Abu Halima, was flown in from Egypt. He fled the United States within days of Mr. Salameh's arrest, the investigator said, authorities allege that he organised the bombing.

Mr. Abu Halima's brother,



An artist's drawing shows Mahmoud Abu Halima (second from left) appearing before a federal judge

Thursday, Mr. Abu Halima let his attorneys plead his innocence before the judge (AFP photo)

Mohammad, said he had alerted the FBI to Mahmoud's whereabouts.

"Why not?" Mohammad Abu Halima asked while standing outside the courtroom where his brother pleaded innocent. "I do not hide it. He did not have any relationship with these people."

Mr. Abu Halima, Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad, like Mr. Kaisi, are charged with aiding and abetting the bombing. All were ordered held without bail.

The other suspect, Ibrahim Mgbrowny, 42, an Egyptian living in Brooklyn, pleaded innocent to obstruction of justice and other charges. He allegedly scuffled with agents who searched his apartment as part of the bombing investigation.

Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad appeared together in court, both were in handcuffs. Dozens of friends and family members turned out to support them.

Mr. Salameh shouted, "I am not guilty," as he stood before federal magistrate Judge Michael Dolinger.

Mr. Abu Halima, in a separate arraignment, did not speak. His attorney alleged that his client was tortured for 10 days while in custody in Egypt before he was

spirited into the United States Wednesday.

"He was blindfolded, he was beaten, he was tortured," lawyer Jesse Berman said. "He has cigarette burns around his private parts. They hung him from a board like shishkabob."

The FBI's Fox said Mr. Abu Halima was examined by a doctor Wednesday night. Mr. Fox released no details.

The one paragraph indictment of Mr. Abu Halima, read in court, provided no details on a possible motive for the blast.

In Washington, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said it was unclear if a foreign government or "international terrorists" were responsible. "I think it's too early to say that," he said.

The Egyptian government said Thursday Mr. Abu Halima returned to the United States voluntarily although he denied any role in the blast.

The Interior Ministry's statement that Mr. Abu Halima was not forced to leave Wednesday appeared aimed at deflecting charges by Muslim fundamentalists that Egypt's government was being submissive to the West.

There are fears of increased extremist violence because of the

charges against Mr. Abu Halima.

Mr. Abu Halima left Egypt in the custody of U.S. agents Wednesday, about five days after he was arrested by Egyptian police in his hometown in the Nile Delta town of Kafr Al Diwar.

In the first official comment on the case, the Interior Ministry said U.S. investigators showed Egyptian authorities evidence of Mr. Abu Halima's involvement in the Feb. 26 blast.

Mr. Abu Halima also was confronted with the evidence. "When faced with this, he denied any role in the incident," it said. "He insisted on his innocence in front of American investigators, who had gathered this evidence."

But the suspect agreed to return to the United States, the statement said.

Mr. Abu Halima, 33, entered Egypt on a German passport that he obtained after marrying a German woman. The government said he emigrated to Germany in 1980 and used his German passport to travel to the United States, where he was given a permanent residency permit.

U.S. records show his nationality as Egyptian.

## Bid to impeach Yeltsin sputters

(Continued from page 1)

sion: To put to a nationwide vote April 25 not only the question on confidence in the president but also on confidence in the congress," Mr. Yeltsin said to weak applause.

The constitutional crisis, Mr. Yeltsin said, was aggravated by the economic hardships caused in great part by the radical reforms he began last year.

Mr. Yeltsin told lawmakers: "The economy remains the number one problem today."

"It must be acknowledged that the economic crisis was aggravated by our mistakes: Insufficient social orientation of the reforms, inadequate support by the state of new forms of management and of the new strata of owners in the production sphere, absence of an efficient, anti-inflation policy and excessive reliance on foreign aid," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Mr. Yeltsin shared the blame with the central bank, which he has accused of fueling inflation by granting huge credits to insolvent state-owned industries.

The uncontrolled policy of the central bank contributed heavily to spinning the fly wheel of inflation. As a result the life of the majority of the Russian people has worsened," he said, drawing jeers from the hall.

Mr. Zorkin had been expected to present the court's finding that Mr. Yeltsin had violated the constitution by trying to override the legislators with his speech Saturday night. At that time — before Mr. Yeltsin's milder decree was published on Wednesday — Mr. Zorkin had said Mr. Yeltsin had acted illegally.

However, in his speech to lawmakers Friday, Mr. Zorkin glossed over any constitutional violations and instead offered the compromise.

The congress, dominated by ex-communist apparatchiks and factory directors opposed to Mr. Yeltsin's economic and political reforms, has been stripping the president of his executive powers for months. The lawmakers say Russia's Soviet-era constitution gives them supreme authority.

Mr. Khasbulatov had opened the congress with a slap at the president for trying to "trample the constitution."

"Unfortunately, we have come across an extraordinary circumstance: A desire to monopolise all power — legislative and executive — in one branch," Mr. Khasbulatov said, without mentioning Mr. Yeltsin by name.

But he also did not call for Mr.



Supporters of Russian President Boris Yeltsin Friday demonstrate near the Kremlin (AFP photo)

Yeltsin's impeachment. On Thursday night, he said he was against such a move.

Mr. Khasbulatov also is against the April 25 referendum and instead wants early presidential and legislative elections.

"The best form of a referendum is an election," Mr. Khasbulatov said in a nationally televised interview Thursday. "Let's agree on a date for electing a new president. Let's agree on a date for electing a new parliament."

Legislative elections now are set for March 1995 and presidential voting for June 1996.

Mr. Yeltsin in the past has suggested advancing each date by one year. But he insists simultaneous balloting would create a dangerous power vacuum and demands legislative elections first.

Yeltsin, meanwhile, signed a

decree Friday that replaced Finance Minister Vasily Barshuk with reformist Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Fyodorov, according to the ITAR-TASS news agency.

Mr. Fyodorov has been formulating economic policy since the congress in December forced Mr. Yeltsin to replace his reformist acting prime minister, Yegor Gaidar, with communist era bureaucrat Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Economics Minister Andrei Neechayev, another target of hardliners, was removed, along with Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Saltykov. Deputy Premier Alexander Shokhin said Mr. Yeltsin was ready to accept other new members to the cabinet provided they did not undermine reforms.

minister in the Likud government of Begin in 1977 and played a key role in peace talks with Egypt that produced Israel's only accord with an Arab state.

Mr. Weizman quit as defence minister in 1980, in part because he felt the government was not doing enough to make peace with other Arab states and the Palestinians. He later switched from Likud to Labour.

During the five-year Palestinian uprising, Mr. Weizman became an advocate for negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

He retired from parliament in February 1992, saying he was done with politics.

In congratulating Mr. Weizman, Prime Minister Rabin said he hoped the new president would help "ease differences" among Israelis and unite them behind the U.S.-backed peace negotiations.

## Exiles split again on faction lines

(Continued from page 1)

over how to mark Jerusalem Day, an Iranian-sponsored holiday designed to express solidarity with the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Islamic Jihad's followers marked the occasion with a demonstration during which Israeli and American flags were burned in the camp.

The rest of the exiles, who belong to Hamas and who make up the overwhelming majority of the exiles, boycotted the protest, claiming the agitation did not serve their plight.

Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) dispatched its top lieutenant, Fadi Shurro, to the camp through a mountain trail Monday night.

The next day, which marked the beginning of the Eid Al Fitr feast, Mr. Shurro announced the reconciliation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Middle East peace talks were stalled by the Dec. 17 expulsion and Israel's refusal to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which demands the immediate return of the expellees.

A Palestinian delegation was to meet U.S. Secretary of State

Warren Christopher in Washington Friday to discuss the expellee crisis and resuming the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The Palestinian team said any resumption, scheduled for April 20, hinged on the outcome of the talks in Washington.

Both Dr. Rantisi and Sheikh Shami agreed the meeting between the Palestinians and Mr. Christopher would produce nothing new. They said their morale was high and they were determined to return home.

"The (expellees) did not authorise anyone to speak in their name," Dr. Rantisi said. "We are not committed to the results of any discussion of the issue with anyone other than the (expellees) themselves."

"I personally don't expect Christopher to stand up for Israeli terrorism,"

Sheikh Shami warned the Palestinian delegation against compromising over the exiles and said their only goal should be to force Israel to cancel its expulsion orders.

The men rejected in February a U.S.-brokered Israeli offer to take back 101 of them and the rest by the end of the year.

They reiterated on Friday that they would accept nothing less than the full implementation of U.N. Resolution 799.

## Palestinians demand Israeli pledge

(Continued from page 1)

meeting later Friday between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and a Palestinian team led by Faisal Al-Husseini. Dr. Shafi was not attending the Washington meeting.

He said he hoped the meeting would help reach "an acceptable solution that would enable the Palestinian side to return to the talks."

In Tunis, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Friday he hopes the talks the Palestinian team will hold with Mr. Christopher would revive the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

"We are attached to the peace process and we hope the U.S. administration and peace-lovers in Israel would remove the obstacles to the process," Mr. Arafat said.

"I sincerely hope that our Palestinian delegation will find the responses which will push forward the peace process," he told the Palestinian news agency Wafa.

The United States and Russia, co-sponsors of the peace process, have invited Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinians and Israel to resume their talks in Washington on April 20.

Israel has accepted the offer. The Arabs will decide whether to go to Washington during a meeting in Damascus Sunday which Dr. Abdul Shafi will attend.

"We hope there will be a unified Arab stance but will not abandon our position regarding the resumption," Dr. Abdul Shafi said. "If there is a conviction by the other Arab parties to go to the talks, let them go. We will not object."

## U.N. team seeks Iraqi assurances

(Continued from page 1)

provide comprehensive information about arsenals, including the network of suppliers that had helped develop its secret nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programme.

It also is resisting a Security Council demand for establishing

along-term monitoring plan to ensure Iraq does not try to revive any of the non-conventional weapons programmes, including production of ballistic missiles.

The first team to launch a monitoring operation in Iraq returned to Bahrain last weekend

## Netanyahu elected Likud leader

(Continued from page 1)

unit and is believed to have been on a team that overhauled hijackers on a Sabena airliner in Tel Aviv in 1972.

The campaign was the first vote among Likud's general membership for party leader.

It was bitter and bruising, with Mr. Netanyahu publicly confessing to adultery in order, he said, to head off a blackmail attempt against his wife he alleged was organised by people close to a Likud rival.

This was interpreted to be David Levy, a former foreign minister, who came in second with 26.3 per cent. Mr. Levy rejected the charges, calling Mr. Netanyahu an "eel."

In third place was Benjamin Begin, the ascetic son of the late premier Menachem Begin, with 15.1 per cent. Moshe Katsav, a former transport minister, came

in fourth with 6.5 per cent, according to overseer judge Hanna Even-Or who said 68 per cent of the Likud's 216,000 registered members voted.

Mr. Netanyahu called on the other candidates "to put the differences aside. What is behind us is much less important than what lies ahead."

Weizman elected president

Ezer Weizman, a former general turned dove, was elected Wednesday as Israel's seventh president.

Mr. Weizman, the candidate of the ruling Labour Party, outpolled former parliament Speaker Dov Shilansky from Likud 66-53 in a secret parliament ballot. There was one abstention.

He will succeed President Chaim Herzog, who has served two five-year terms. The changeover is May 13.

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# Economy

## Japanese household savings grow despite recession

TOKYO (AP) — Despite tough economic times, Japanese savings grew last year, with the average household's nest egg reaching 15.4 million yen (\$132,000), according to government figures.

The figures uphold Japanese households' longstanding reputation for frugality. Japanese money saving habits are often held up as an example to Americans, whose rate of savings tends to be low.

But savings grew at a slower rate last year, reflecting the erosion of income growth during the economic slump, said the Statistics Bureau of the prime minister's office. Average savings per household at the end of 1992 were up 4.9 per cent from a year earlier, compared to a 7.6 per cent increase in 1991.

Among non-wage earning families, including independent business owners and senior citizens, average savings rose 4.3 per cent to 21.25 million yen (\$180,000). Average savings by wage earners and their families rose 5.2 per cent to 11.87 million yen (\$100,900).

Among wage earners, time deposits were the most popular form of savings, with a 4.6 per cent share, followed by 19 per cent in life insurance and 13 per cent in securities.

The share of savings going to securities was the lowest since the agency began keeping records more than three decades ago, in 1959. Investors apparently were more worried by weak stock prices than by low interest rates on time deposits, the report said.

In 1989, the share of savings put into securities peaked at 23 per cent.

The bureau compiled data from about 6,100 households nationwide.

## Iran extends \$30m credit to Ukraine for oil purchases

KIEV (R) — Iran has extended a \$30 million credit to Ukraine for oil imports to help the former Soviet republic end its dependence on Russian energy, the country's deputy foreign minister has said.

"Iran is giving Ukraine this credit to help implement existing contracts for Iranian oil exports," Mahmoud Vaezi told a news conference.

He said a major Iranian bank would soon open a branch in Kiev specially to facilitate oil purchases.

Ukraine is in the throes of an energy crisis 15 months after independence from the Soviet Union. Shortages of petrol have become so acute that sales to individuals have been banned for the entire month of March.

Under a contract concluded last month, Iran is to ship to Ukraine four million tonnes of oil this year.

The same agreement provided for long-term construction of a gas pipeline from Iran to Ukraine through Azerbaijan and Russia, but authorities in Moscow have so far failed to give their formal consent.

Deliveries have been hampered by the absence of a pipeline connecting the two countries and inadequate facilities in Ukraine to accommodate big tankers.

The first Iranian tanker carrying 60,000 tonnes of oil is expected later this month in Odessa.

Ukrainian authorities plan to build up a 40-vessel tanker fleet. Deputy Prime Minister Yuli Yofe has said the first of several new terminals at the Black Sea port, capable of handling 12 million tonnes, would be completed by 1994.

Ukraine has agreed to provide Iran with sugar, grain and metal. Ukrainian newspapers have speculated that the former Soviet republic would also sell arms to Tehran.

## U.S. banks posted record profit in '92

WASHINGTON (R) — Profits at U.S. banks nearly tripled in the last quarter of 1992, government regulators have said, enabling the industry to chalk up its best year ever as rates paid to depositors fell.

America's 11,461 commercial banks earned \$8.2 billion last quarter, up from \$3.0 billion in the final 1991 quarter, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) said in a report likely to

calm lingering fears of a savings and loan-type bailout for banks.

For the year, bank profits surged 80 per cent, to a record \$32.2 billion from \$17.9 billion in 1991, aided by the need to set aside less money as a cushion for problem loans.

They were the highest annual profits since \$24.8 billion in 1988, and the FDIC now is gearing up to cut its estimates for likely bank failures in 1993.

Big banks in the northeast and the west, which have suffered from souring loans, especially in depressed real estate markets, showed the biggest earnings gains.

The FDIC said profits were boosted by the spread favourable to banks between the interest rates they earned on loans and other assets, and the rates they paid to depositors.

That gap widened throughout

1992 to historic levels as interest rates tumbled, forcing down yields on deposits. Rates charged by banks for loans, by comparison, fell less sharply.

FDIC officials also said depositors were moving out of longer maturing certificates of deposit into short-term instruments such as money market accounts that yield less but offer consumers more flexibility to move funds around.

## Balladur wants balanced world trade deal

PARIS (R) — Conservative leader Edouard Balladur, striking a less aggressive stance than the head of his Gaullist party, said Friday that France must seek a balanced world trade pact covering more than just agriculture.

Mr. Balladur, a leading candidate to head a centre-right government set to take power next week, said the success of world trade talks under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was crucial for French and European economies.

"Agriculture is important of course but industrial activities — textiles, services — are also important," Mr. Balladur told RTL radio.

"What is at stake is the construction of an international economy based on fair and balanced trade," he said. "What we Europeans are asking is not to be subjected to tougher rules than those for the Americans or Japanese."

That is fair, we must defend that point of view.

The tone of his comments contrasted with recent remarks by Jacques Chirac, head of the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) party which leads the centre-right coalition that scored an overwhelming victory in the first round of general elections last Sunday.

Mr. Chirac, a contender for the presidency in 1995, has threatened to spark an EC crisis over a farm trade accord reached between Brussels and Washington, which he considers "shameful."

## S. Korea's foreign exchange holdings increase

SEOUL (AP) — Helped by a government drive to curb imports, South Korea's foreign exchange holdings rose by 25 per cent to \$17.15 billion last year.

As a result of the anti-import campaign, the current account deficit was cut by nearly half to \$4.6 billion last year from \$8.73 billion in 1991, the central bank said.

In 1992, South Korea suffered a trade deficit of \$2.2 billion, down from \$6.90 billion a year ago.

Last year's exports rose 6.6 per cent to \$76.6 billion, while imports increased a mere 0.3 per cent to \$81.70 billion, the lowest gain in 10 years.

South Korea launched a tight economic policy beginning in 1990, when it suffered a current account shortfall of \$2.2 billion from a surplus of \$5.1 billion the previous year.

The government's efforts to curb inflation and slash deficits have caused high unemployment, business failures and a slowdown in exports and domestic sales.

In 1992, South Korean exports to the United States, Japan and Europe were sluggish, but shipments to developing countries increased.

The bank said exports to the United States, South Korea's largest overseas market, dropped 2.5 per cent last year to \$10 billion. But its surplus with South East Asian nations widened to \$7.96 billion from \$5.46 billion.



Abdul Aziz Al Zamel

## SABIC continues slide in profits

MANAMA (R) — Saudi Arabia's industrial conglomerate SABIC has reported a decline in profits for the fourth straight year, blaming it on unfavourable market conditions.

A statement from SABIC, the Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corp., said net profit dropped 14 per cent to 1.96 billion riyals (\$523 million) in 1992 from 2.30 billion (\$612 million) in 1991.

Its net has declined each year from a record 3.68 billion riyals (\$981 million) in 1988.

SABIC Chairman Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al Zamel blamed it on "the continued drop in the prices of petrochemical products internationally, a surplus in energy and imbalance between supply and demand," the official Saudi Press Agency said.

SABIC controls and operates 15 joint venture complexes with Western and Japanese companies, built to diversify away from dependence on raw oil and gas exports.

Using the kingdom's natural gas reserves as feedstock and fuel, they produce mainly petrochemicals and chemical products such as plastics and fertiliser, as well as steel.

The annual dividend remains unchanged at one billion riyals (\$266.7 million). The Saudi government, the world's largest oil exporter, owns 70 per cent and private investors hold the rest of the shares, traded in the Saudi stock market.

Total sales revenue rose about 45 per cent to 13 billion riyals (\$3.5 billion) from nine billion riyals (\$2.4 billion) — and that reinforced SABIC's long-term business goals, said Sheikh Zamel, who is also industry and electricity minister.

Output rose 19.3 per cent to 15.7 million tonnes from 13.1 million. Exports to 75 countries rose by 23.9 per cent to 12.5 million tonnes.

## Danish media: KLM, Swissair, Austrian and SAS to merge

COPENHAGEN (R) — Scandinavian Airlines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Swissair and Austrian Airlines plan a full four-airline merger, two Danish newspapers reported Friday.

The Boersen financial daily and national daily Jyllands-Posten said they had obtained documents showing the four carriers were in agreement on the time plan and the principles for a merger.

Cooperation would begin next January and after a transition phase the new airline would operate with joint logo, colours and route network.

The four airlines said earlier this month they were deepening a study on a four-way link by setting up working groups to discuss the options, but declined to elaborate.

The Danish newspaper reports said the four airlines planned to transfer their assets to a new company in which Austrian Airlines would own 10 per cent and the others would have 30 per cent each.

The SAS board had given its approval of a preliminary plan, they said.

But Danish Transport Minister Helge Mortensen denied that the SAS board had given the green light for a merger. "There are many plans. We are only in an initial phase and SAS manage-

ment is keeping the Scandinavian governments informed," he said.

Mr. Mortensen stressed that the approval of the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian governments, which together own half of SAS, is required before concrete negotiations on a merger or other forms of cooperation can start.

"Nothing has been presented to us," he said.

Mr. Mortensen said he believed the result of the talks would be a joint venture between the four carriers rather than a merger.

SAS management was expected to present a basis for negotiations in May at the earliest, he said.

The merger model reported by Danish media is similar to the structure of SAS itself, in which Sweden has 40 per cent and Denmark and Norway have 30 per cent each.

It was not yet decided whether the headquarters of the new carrier would be in Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Zurich or Vienna, the reports said.

A merger is seen to have broad support in Sweden and Norway. But the Danish government and the country's unions are critical because they fear it would mean shifting the hub for SAS intercontinental flights from Copenhagen to Amsterdam.

## Nigerian fuel subsidy cut plan triggers unease

ABUJA (R) — OPEC-member Nigeria is pushing ahead with controversial plans for sizeable cuts in subsidies on domestic fuel prices despite fears of widespread unrest.

Some politicians say higher petrol prices, sought by foreign creditors to mend a battered economy, could trigger chaos capable of upsetting the army's delayed civilian rule programme.

"We have no choice but to increase prices of our petroleum products by an appreciable figure," a member of the civilian transitional council, which runs daily government business for the military, has said.

"We hope it will not be a matter for the military or the police. We hope the goodwill of Nigerians will be brought to bear on any decision we take," the official added, referring to possible unrest.

Official sources said pump petrol prices of 0.70 naira (three U.S. cents) a litre might be raised to at least five naira (20 cents) initially only for private vehicles, in April or May and that further

hikes could follow.

Some of Nigeria's 60 civilian presidency hopefuls vying to succeed military President Ibrahim Babangida in August have urged him not to tamper with the subsidies now.

"I doubt if the (civilian rule) programme will go through if there is a big cut in the subsidy because the crisis that is going to come up will be so chaotic," candidate Sarah Jibril said.

Millions of Nigerians earning barely enough for food and transport regard access to some of the world's cheapest petrol, less than the cost of a bottle of water, as a right after a decade of austerity under army rule.

"The people are already hurting badly. Removal of the subsidy will also worsen corruption, prostitution and other ills," Ms. Jibril told Reuters.

Elected senators and others fear any unrest could inflame sectarian and ethnic passions, leaving General Babangida with an option to delay his handover to civilians for a fourth time since 1990.

## UNCTAD: Poorest states worst off during recession

GENEVA (AP) — The world's poorest countries face dim prospects this year as wealthier countries concentrate on their own problems, a U.N. agency has said.

The 47 so-called "least developed countries" are expected to record the fourth straight year of economic decline in 1993, according to the annual report of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

In 1991, the latest year for which final figures are available, output of the countries declined by 0.2 per cent, UNCTAD said. It said estimates indicate output may have broken even in 1992, but said it still was outstripped by population growth, meaning there was a per-capita decline.

The countries are suffering from a range of world problems and, because the cold war has ended, can't even try to play the superpowers off against each other for more aid, the report said.

At least 14 African nations faced food emergencies last year because of drought, with civil war compounding the problems of Somalia, Liberia, Mozambique and Ethiopia, it said.

UNCTAD urged international aid to be "brought speedily to the drought areas" to head off a large number of people adding to the world's refugee burden.

Only a handful of the countries have bucked the gloomy trend, it said, citing an increase in the value of exports from Burma, Malawi, Mauritania, Nepal and Uganda.

In Afghanistan, Djibouti and Haiti, however, the value of exports dropped by more than 10 per cent, it said.

Competition for aid increased as the world has mounted efforts to combat starvation in Somalia and other countries and as the West has sought to help the former Soviet Bloc change to a market economy, it said.

France is the largest donor to the least developed countries,

giving \$1.5 billion in 1991, followed by Germany \$1.1 billion, Japan \$999 million and the United States \$992 million, UNCTAD said.

According to the size of their economies, however, the most generous country was Norway, with its aid amounting to .54 per cent of its gross national product (GNP), the report said. Other countries whose giving exceeded .2 per cent of GNP were Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal.

France's giving to the least developed was .16 per cent of GNP, compared with .1 per cent for Germany, .05 per cent for Japan and .03 per cent for the United States, UNCTAD said.

The worldwide recession has had a multiple impact on the least developed countries, it said. Wealthy nations not only have less to spend on aid but also buy fewer exports from the poorer countries.

A key source of income for many poor countries is from citizens who go abroad to work and send money home to their families, but unemployment in wealthier countries has "sharply reduced foreign exchange (earnings) from this source and in some cases brought them virtually to a halt," the report said.

Population is growing fast in the poorest countries than in the rest of the world, and attempts to control the growth depend on foreign aid, the UNCTAD report said. The 47 countries currently have a population exceeding 1.2 billion by the year 2025.

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## LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.2445/50	Canadian dollar	1.6385/95
	1.6385/95	Deutsche marks	1.8470/75
	1.8470/75	Dutch guilders	1.5175/85
	1.5175/85	Swiss francs	33.78/83
	33.78/83	Belgian francs	5.5800/30
	5.5800/30	French francs	1605/1607
	1605/1607	Italian lire	116.90/95
	116.90/95	Japanese yen	7.7800/900
	7.7800/900	Swedish crowns	6.9600/700
	6.9600/700	Norwegian crowns	6.2950/3050
	6.2950/3050	Danish crowns	11.4850/60
One sterling	\$1.4850/60		
Gold (ounce)	\$332.45/332.85		

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## World News

### West puts pressure on Serbs to accept Bosnia peace plan

UNITED NATIONS (R) — International pressure mounted on Bosnia's Serbs Friday to follow the example of their Muslim and Croat rivals and accept a peace plan to end the war in the former Yugoslavia republic.

The United States, Britain and France began discussing new Security Council measures against the rump state of Yugoslavia — consisting of Serbia proper and its ally Montenegro — with stronger sanctions if Bosnian Serbs continued to hold out.

These would include cutting transport links, freezing financial assets and seizing planes, ships and trucks violating U.N. sanctions already in place, diplomats said.

The resolution would probably also set a deadline for Bosnian Serbs to accept the accords, they added.

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is believed to be the key to convincing fellow Serbs in Bosnia to accept the plan.

No action would be taken until peace negotiators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen report to Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and the Security Council, expected next week.

The envoys, speaking on condition of anonymity, said winning approval from Moscow, traditional ally of the Serbs, would be difficult before Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin meet in Vancouver on April 3 and 4 for their first summit.

Russia's envoy to the peace talks, Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaly Churkin, tried Thursday to persuade Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic to change his position.

The two met at Russia's U.N. mission shortly after Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic agreed to two important elements in the plan drawn up by mediators Mr. Vance and Lord Owen.

They included a map dividing Bosnia into 10 semi-autonomous provinces and arrangements for an interim government.

Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban, who had already accepted the map, signed an altered version of it as well as the new document on government arrangements.

"By signing this peace agreement we have signed everything that was asked from us," Mr. Izetbegovic said. "It is the time

for the international community to do its part."

He said he would rescind his decision if Bosnian Serbs did not sign within a "reasonable time frame."

Several hours after the signing ceremony, the Security Council issued a statement saying it was ready to "take the steps required" to bring about peace.

Mr. Karadzic told reporters "we cannot and must not accept" the peace plan. He said that if additional sanctions were imposed on Yugoslavia, he would wash his hands of the talks.

Lord Owen called on Bosnia's Serbs Friday to end the fighting. "There comes a time when the talking has to come to the crunch and the crunch is here now," Lord Owen, exasperated by his seven-month campaign for a peace agreement over Bosnia, told British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio.

"Some terrible things have been done in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This war must be brought to an end and nobody has an excuse to continue the war," said the former British foreign secretary.

The talks took place in a Ser-

bian government villa in the Belgrade suburb of Dedinje.

Gen. Mladic drove to the Yugoslav capital Friday morning from his headquarters at Pale, near Sarajevo, which his army has kept under siege for 11 months.

On Thursday Mr. Milosevic, after talks with Gen. Morillon, urged an immediate ceasefire in Bosnia and called on U.N. and Bosnian Serb military chiefs to work out terms.

Noting that Bosnian Muslims signed the peace pact, Lord Owen said it was time to put real pressure on the Serbs.

"They will now have to be pressurised by the international community. They know my stance, I am not anti-Serb," he said.

Meanwhile, Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic began talks Friday with U.N. peacekeepers on a ceasefire in the former Yugoslav republic's 11-month-old civil war.

Gen. Mladic, whose rebel Serb army is battling Muslim and Croat forces, met the head of U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia, General Lars Erik Wahlgren, and the commander for Bosnia, General Philippe Morillon.



ERUPTIONS EASE AT MAYON: A resident works in his rose garden while the erupting Mayon Volcano (background) continues to emit ash and lava Friday. Some residents have become accustomed to the volcanic eruption gifting surrounding towns with fertile vegetation. The Mayon Volcano began to calm down Friday, but volcanologists warned the six-day series of eruptions could escalate again. "It may only take a few hours for its condition to turn for the worse,"

Philippine government volcanologist Ronaldo Arboleda said in an interview. Over 100 explosive volcanic earthquakes were measured overnight, down on the 250 recorded over 12 hours Wednesday. The earthquakes are the scientist's main measure of volcanic activity. Mr. Arboleda said Mayon was still spewing fountains of lava from its crater and erupting ash and steam. "All these and other parameters indicate that Mayon is still in a very unstable condition," he said (AFP photo)

### Angola says military situation alarming

LUANDA (R) — The Angolan government said Friday the military situation in the central highlands was alarming and urged the United Nations to air-drop food to a quarter million people trapped in the besieged city of Cuito.

General Joao De Matos, chief of staff of the armed forces, told state radio that the situation in central Angola had reached "alarming proportions", especially in the towns of Cuito, Menongue and Cubal which are besieged by UNITA rebels.

Cuito is cut off from air supplies and aid agencies there ran out of food to distribute a week ago. The U.N. estimates that 70,000 people in the city — normal population 250,000 — are on the verge of starvation.

All three towns are under pressure from UNITA, which captured Huambo, capital of the central highlands, three weeks

ago and is consolidating its hold on the region.

The government daily Jornal De Angola simultaneously expressed scepticism about a U.S. effort to bring UNITA back to the negotiating table and resume the tattered peace process.

It said a first meeting in the Ivory Coast Thursday between U.S. envoy Geoffrey Davidson and UNITA official Jorge Valentin "did not produce any positive signal for ending the Angolan crisis."

The talks are expected to continue for two or three days. While UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) presses in the central highlands, the government is regaining ground in northwestern Angola, and has recaptured two towns this month.

The defence ministry says a third, Ndalatando, capital of

Kwanza North province, is expected to fall shortly to the army.

The army stopped flights to Cuito, capital of Bie Province, after UNITA forces began shelling the airport runway this week.

Luis Paulino Dos Santos, governor of Bie province of which Cuito is the capital, appealed Thursday for a U.N. airdrop of food to the city, 600 kilometres southeast of Luanda.

UNITA radio has reported for several days that rebel forces are advancing towards the city centre and on Thursday night it spoke of fighting near the provincial governor's palace.

U.N. officials who declined to be named said they believed Cuito could fall to UNITA within days and the United Nations concern was to evacuate about 20 Angolan U.N. employees there.

"It is going to go and when it goes it is going to be a very ugly affair," one U.N. official said.

### Chirac backs down on demand that Mitterrand quit

PARIS (R) — Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac Friday backed down on his demand that Socialist President Francois Mitterrand resign after a conservative landslide in French parliamentary elections.

"No one disputes the president's constitutional right to finish his term if he wishes," Mr. Chirac said on his last campaign trip before Sunday's second round run-off expected to give the centre-right as many as 500 of the 577 National Assembly seats.

Mr. Chirac's climbdown appeared to clear the way for Mr. Mitterrand to appoint Gaullist former Finance Minister Edouard Balladur to head a conservative government next week.

The outgoing Socialists, rejected in last Sunday's first round by voters angry at unemployment and scandals, could keep as few as 50 of the 277 seats they won in 1988.

The president, whose term runs until 1995, had threatened not to pick a prime minister from the Gaullist Rally For the Republic (RPR) party if Mr. Chirac continued his campaign.

"Why should the president throw himself into the wolf's jaws by calling on someone from the camp that has announced its intention not to respect the constitution?" Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, a close Mitterrand loyalist, said Friday.

Playing on divisions between

the RPR and its ally, the Union for French Democracy (UDF), Mr. Dumas said: "One of the camps (in the new majority) won't be able to dictate its line." He also said the prime minister would have to be strongly pro-European.

Mr. Chirac, who "cohabited" uncomfortably with Mr. Mitterrand as head of a right-wing government in 1986-88, had also disputed the president's right to control foreign and defence policy.

But on Friday, the Gaullist leader pledged to respect the constitution, which empowers the president to choose the prime minister, command the armed forces and negotiate treaties.

"Cohabitation seems inevitable to me," Mr. Chirac said. "After all, France must be governed." Mr. Balladur, 63, who watched the row with growing alarm, also sought to calm tempers, telling reporters in an apparent message to Mr. Mitterrand that he would not be a prisoner of his party.

"In this kind of period — we are in the last days of an election campaign — it is customary for tension to mount," he told Radio Luxembourg. "We must give (the debate) the importance it deserves and no more."

Mr. Balladur said the president and the centre-right government would have to show respect for each other in the coming period of "cohabitation", so each could exercise his responsibilities.

### WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Japan to send troops to Mozambique

TOKYO (R) — Japan will send about 50 military personnel to Mozambique by late May to join United Nations peacekeeping operations in the war-torn southern African nation, the government said Friday. "We decided this was an appropriate contribution for Japan to make, and is in line with the U.N.'s strong expectations," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono told reporters. It will be Tokyo's second U.N. peacekeeping operation. Last September, Japan sent about 600 troops to Cambodia after years of heated debate over whether this was allowed under the country's pacifist post-war constitution. Visiting Tokyo in February, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali praised Japan for its help in Cambodia and said he was keen for it to send troops to Mozambique. A Foreign Ministry official quoted by Kyodo News Agency said Friday's decision would help dispel the impression Japan was concerned primarily with Asia.

#### Seoul purge claims new victims

SEOUL (R) — Two millionaire lawmakers of South Korea's ruling party quit their seats in parliament Friday, the latest victims of President Kim Young-Sam's intensified drive to purge corruption-tainted politicians. Yoo Hak-Song, a retired army general who served as chairman of the National Assembly's Defence Committee, said he would give up his assembly seat because of controversy over alleged illegal land speculation. "I decided to resign as member of parliament in the belief an obstacle to reform should be cleared," Mr. Yoo told reporters. Shortly after Mr. Yoo's announcement legislator Kim Mun-Ki, who recently disclosed he was worth \$23 million, offered to give up his assembly seat, a party official said. Mr. Kim, who also runs a school foundation, has been accused by local media of having illegally built a restaurant in a green-belt area in northeastern Seoul. News reports said he might even face arrest.

#### Chamorro: Clinton won't 'abandon' Nicaragua

MANAGUA (AP) — President Violeta Barrios De Chamorro has said she remains confident the Clinton administration will not abandon her country amid a crisis over millions of dollars in withheld U.S. aid. "I have faith that President Bill Clinton will not abandon Nicaragua," Mrs. Chamorro said in an interview with the Associated Press. Three president, speaking from her office, said domestic opponents were attempting to cast a negative image of her administration before influential U.S. lawmakers and opinionmakers in a continued bid to withhold the aid. Only this week, presidential aide Antonio Lacayo returned from a trip to Washington in which he unsuccessfully appealed for the immediate release of \$54 million in American aid frozen last year.

#### Divided opposition to challenge Mugabe

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe (R) — Zimbabwe's opposition, sapped by splits and running out of time for elections, launches a new bid this weekend to break President Robert Mugabe's dominance. A new political party grouping Zimbabwe's educated elite and backed by sections of the influential Roman Catholic Church hopes to capitalise on public anger over the government's handling of an economy ravaged by recession and drought. Analysts surveying the likely leadership of Forum and the timing of its launch only two years before Zimbabwe's next general elections said the effort could be too little, too late. "Forum has no chance of becoming a serious challenge to the government because its leaders are a group of elites whose concerns are not of the common man," Zimbabwe University political scientist Jonathan Moyo told Reuters. "They have neither the time to carry out an effective campaign nor a political platform that could win them the elections in 1995, given the fact that despite Mugabe's falling popularity he still commands significant support in rural areas where most people live."

### China wants Hong Kong Airport built before 1997, official says

HONG KONG (R) — China's top official on Hong Kong affairs said Friday that Peking hoped the colony's planned new airport could be built before 1997 when the Chinese resume sovereignty, a mainland-controlled newspaper reported.

Lu Ping also said he believed it would be possible for Britain and China to hold routine talks in their Joint Liaison Group (JLG) despite the bitter row over Governor Chris Patten's proposals for democratic reform, the New Evening Post said.

His conciliatory remarks on the airport — whose future has been cast into doubt in recent months by China's opposition to plans for its financing — were the latest in a barrage of contradictory signals from Peking.

Peking's official media Friday also accused Mr. Patten of plotting rebellion, but Hong Kong's rollercoaster stock market instead chose to put faith in Mr. Lu, and the blue-chip Hang Seng Index soared 1.5 per cent.

Mr. Lu, head of China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office,

said China's position towards the \$22 billion airport, one of the world's biggest current infrastructure projects, had not changed.

Peking hoped it could be built before Britain had to respect the Sino-British memorandum of understanding on the project, the paper quoted him as saying in Peking. Analysts have recently speculated that China might tear up the 1991 document, scaring off the investors vital to its completion.

The JLG — which is meant to hold regular talks on the nitty-gritty of running Hong Kong in the run-up to 1997, but which has gone more than three months with no date set for its next session — should meet as there were still many unsolved problems between Britain and China, Mr. Lu said.

Another of Hong Kong's Peking-run newspapers said Friday China's National People's Congress (NPC), or parliament, had softened proposals to set up a new body on Hong Kong which critics fear will be a shadow authority undermining Mr. Patten's

rule. The Ta Kung Pao said the president of the Congress had inserted two amendments into a motion to set up a preliminary work body for Hong Kong's government after 1997.

Critics say the body, nicknamed a "second stove", could be a shadow authority which would undermine British rule in Hong Kong over the next four years.

The new version states the standing committee of NPC is authorised to decide when to set up the body, instead of "it should be set up as soon as possible," the Ta Kung Pao said, adding that the changes made the proposals "more flexible."

The name of the body has been changed to "preliminary work organisation" from "preliminary work committee", it added.

China has warned it will go ahead with its own plans for 1997 unless Mr. Patten drops legislation extending democracy in the colony's 1995 elections, the last before Peking resumes sovereignty.

### Farrow: Allen's affair with daughter began months earlier

NEW YORK (AP) — Woody Allen's affair with Mia Farrow's oldest daughter began at least a year earlier than he said it did, Farrow testified Thursday. Her voice shaky, she then admitted she punched the young woman after finding nude pictures Allen took of her.

Farrow, testifying for the first time in her custody battle, also accused Allen of inappropriately playing in bed with another, much younger, adopted daughter and said she feared that Allen had had a homosexual relationship.

In three days of testimony beginning last Friday, Allen described Farrow as hysterical, manipulative, even violent. Outside of court, Allen said last week that investigators in Connecticut

cleared him of Farrow's allegations that he molested the younger girl, 7-year-old Dylan.

Allen, 57, and Farrow, 48, his companion and leading lady of 12 years, are fighting for custody of Dylan, adopted son Moses, 15, and their biological son, Satchel, 5.

Their state court fight follows the disclosure of Allen's affair with Soon Yi Previn, 22, Farrow's adopted daughter.

Allen has said the romance began in late December 1991 or early January 1992, when Miss Previn was a college freshman. Farrow testified that Miss Previn told her she had met Allen on Saturdays throughout her senior year in high school, which ended in mid-1991.

### For some Russians, crisis is more personal than political

MOSCOW (AP) — For accountant Raisa Khayanova, the power struggle between President Boris Yeltsin and his hardline parliament is more personal than political.

"I'm afraid for my family. I have two children and I don't want anything to happen to them," said Mrs. Khayanova, 55, who was standing with an empty shopping bag in a downtown shop.

"Maybe there will be civil war if such battles continue, not just between Yeltsin and (Congress speaker Ruslan) Khasbulatov, but between the Communists and the reformers," she said. "I'm for Yeltsin, he's for perestroika, for market reforms."

Russia's constitutional crisis has left many people worried, not only about the fate of the country, but about their own livelihoods and futures.

Some believe that if a compromise is not reached, the only

alternative would be civil war. Others are scared of a return to Communist rule.

Despite the concerns, there has been little civil unrest in Russia linked with the political struggle. Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev has promised the armed forces will stay out of the dispute.

Mr. Yeltsin is counting on the support of the people, not the army, in order to prevail over the parliament. On Thursday night, he repeated his call for a referendum to reaffirm his popular support.

He appears to have wide backing. An opinion poll released Thursday said most Muscovites believe Yeltsin will prevail in his struggle with the Soviet era legislature.

Of the 1,300 Muscovites polled Wednesday, 40 per cent said Mr. Yeltsin would "get the upper hand," while 9 per cent said the legislature would win.

The poll was conducted by the All Russian Centre for the study of Public Opinion. Its statistical margin of error was 4 per cent.

"There's a crisis in the country, not only a political crisis, but an economic crisis. We have nothing to live on," said Lyudmila Semyonova, who preferred giving her middle name instead of her last name.

Standards of living have drastically declined since the Soviet collapse in 1991. Industrial production fell by 19 per cent in 1992, and is expected to fall by 7 per cent in 1993. Overall inflation for 1992 topped 2,000 per cent.

"We're all frightened, for ourselves and for our families," said Ms. Semyonova, who was browsing in a household store with her small son.

Echoing the poll results, she expressed dislike for Mr. Yeltsin's main rival, Mr. Khasbulatov, whom she said was striving

purely for personal gain. For Nina Polochenko, a pensioner, the crisis recalled Stalinist purges.

"We went through such a frightening nightmare with the Communists that now we want things to be better, to improve for our grandchildren," she said.

Zina Sovdagareva, an Armenian from Azerbaijan, said the crisis has taken on a different meaning. "The strongest forces in society today are nationalistic, and that's very dangerous. It's not fear, it's reality," said Ms. Sovdagareva, a single mother with a doctorate in philosophy from the prestigious Moscow State University. She shares a tiny apartment with her 16-year-old daughter Yuliya.

"Yeltsin has tried to improve the situation for many years, but economically things have only gotten worse and worse," she explained. "We have no ideas left to save us."

## COLUMN

### 'Not much sex please, we're British'

LONDON (R) — Nearly a third of British men over the age of 50, even many living with a wife or partner, no longer have sex, a Mori poll published Friday said. And half of those who do still have sex say its no fun. "While 35 per cent want a regular sex life, only 15 per cent of those questioned said they had intercourse more than once a week," said the Times newspaper. The survey of 802 men aged between 50 and 70 indicated that worries linked to medical problems could be one of the reasons for a decline in sexual activity.

### Toying with a fortune

LONDON (R) — A rare, mint-condition miniature Dinky toy truck sold for a record \$4,600 (\$6,800) at auction, a British newspaper said Friday. The six-inch (15-centimetre) Ford truck made in 1956 was sold to a British collector who owns 55 of the 60 Dinky models. "It is so rare that collectors who know everything about this model were not even sure that it still existed," an auctioneer said. "It was the Loch Ness Monster of the Dinky world." The previous record for a Dinky commercial vehicle was \$3,080 (\$4,550) for a Heinz tomato ketchup van.

### Buckets of help stop frogs croaking

BUDAPEST (R) — Hungarians are catching frogs and newts in buckets to stop cars squashing them as they cross a road for spring love-making. An estimated 100,000 marsh, field and tree frogs and warty and spotted newts have begun a spring migration to the Fertő Lake on the border with Austria. The route from lakeside forests to the watery mating grounds crosses busy road. Members of the Green Party, with no money to build tunnels under the highway, have set up fences to direct the frogs and newts into buckets dug in the ground. Two men on round-the-clock duty empty the buckets contents into the lake.

### Jailbirds turn lovebirds

BELFAST (R) — Two convict killers from opposite sides of sectarian divide in Northern Ireland were married in a North Ireland prison. Irish Republic bride Anna Moore is serving a 12-month imprisonment for a 1982 bombing in which 17 people died. Protestant extremist bridegroom Bobby Corry is serving life for 1972 pub bombing in which three people died. The couple can expect to set up home together until the end of the century — they are released early on remission. The wedding party has one-hour alcohol-free reception. Then bride and groom return to their cells.

### Fergie says she messed up her life

LONDON (R) — The Duc of York, estranged wife of Britain's Prince Andrew, has made a mess of her life, apologised to the British public "Fergie" told the Sun newspaper in an interview published Tuesday. "We all make mistakes we learn from them. And I think that's what it's all about. I've messed up my life," added. "I'm sorry." The 33-year-old, who separated from Prince Andrew a year ago, she had managed to reshape her life and was now happier ever. She said she and Prince Andrew were still the best friends.

### Coffee helps you think

LONDON (R) — Coffee help people think more quickly, boost the memory and improve reasoning powers, a new study has reported. The study in the British journal Psychopharmacology found that people who drank six cups of coffee a day had reaction times faster than non-coffee drinkers. The coffee drinkers' four to five per cent better memory and reasoning to effect was more marked in older people. More than 100 people in England, Scotland and Wales were asked about coffee and tea drinking in given tests of their reaction memory and reasoning. Dr. Martin Jarvi, Institute of Psychiatry in London, said he found coffee drinkers better in the tests than non-coffee drinkers. But he also found that coffee drinkers were younger, more educated and smoked a more.